
UNIT 10: ARMED CONFLICTS IN SOUTH ASIA

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10.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit will enable you to understand:

- South Asia in the context of armed conflicts in the region
- Changing nature and characteristics of armed conflicts in the region
- Armed conflicts in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal
- Summary of the discussion and emerging trends

10.1 INTRODUCTION: SOUTH ASIA IN THE CONTEXT OF ARMED CONFLICT

Though there is no consensus on definition and constituent countries of South Asia, most of the literature available on the subject identify eight countries as part of this sub-region of Asia: Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Maldives. The region is also

used synonymously with 'Indian sub-continent' though the term is broadly used more restrictively to refer to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, part of British empire before 1947, as undivided India. The geo-strategic location, population profile and region's contribution to global economy makes South Asia one of the most important regions in the world. With an area of 5.2 million kms, 11.71% of the Asian Continent or 3.5% of the world's land surface area and population of 1.8 billion (39.9% of Asia and over 24% of world's population), South Asia is the most populous and the densely populated geographical region in the world.

Due to its location and geopolitics, historically, the region witnessed multiple invasions from outside powers and migration of people from different parts of the world leading to diversity in population profile. (Sten Rynning, 2017). This factor has been one of the central factors in region's historic, cultural, linguistics and economic developments. (Graham P. Chapman, 2009). The region is also known as birthplace to many of world's religious tradition with immense diversity in ethnic, linguistic and cultural practices. This diversity has also caused pressures on its pluralistic character in the form of assertion of religious and ethnic identities often leading to extremism, violence and multiple armed conflicts that the region witnessed in different phases of history. These differences persist in almost every country in the region in varying degree and continue to escalate in violence and conflicts.

Two of the largest countries in the region, India and Pakistan, are nuclear armed nations engaged in sustained hostilities fuelled by the issue of identity and dispute over Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. These two countries have fought 03 wars, in 1947, 1965, 1971 and a limited war in 1999. Estranged relationship between the two countries has also fuelled internal armed conflicts in India. Globally, region is viewed as a major source of violent extremism through radical Islamist mobilisation and terrorism seen as a major threat to international peace and security. Almost every country in the region is facing problems of terrorism, insurgency, separatism, and ethnic conflicts. Apart from inter-state and intra-state conflicts, South Asia has been witnessing conflicts generated by great power interventions. For example, armed conflicts in Afghanistan, and Pakistan's role in using terrorism as state policy have been caused and sustained, to a great extent by the imperatives of strategic interests of great powers such as USA, former USSR and China.

This Unit provides an overview of armed conflicts in South Asia. In this process, it makes an attempt to contextualise armed conflicts in the region in the existing geopolitical and security imperatives of contemporary world order through an analysis of underlying causes, patterns, key players, role of extra-regional powers and emerging trends in existing armed conflicts in the regions. The Unit is divided into four sections. The first section is introduction to South Asia in the context of existing armed conflicts in the region. The second makes an attempt to understand changing nature of armed conflicts and characteristics of such conflicts in the region. The third section provides an overview of contemporary armed conflicts in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The fourth section provides a summary of discussions and emerging trends in armed conflicts in the region.

10.2 CHANGING NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ARMED CONFLICTS IN THE REGION

In International Relations, inter-state armed conflicts or War between or among states have been seen as the dominant form of armed conflicts. Armed conflicts between states are instruments to achieve political objectives. However, nature and intensity of such conflicts have been conditioned by structure of international system, relationship among its constituent units, technological advancements, strategy, and tactics employed and objectives to be achieved in such conflicts. Trends in contemporary armed conflicts suggest that we are moving into an era where utility of war as a rational instrument of state policy to gain political objective is being seriously questioned (Ken Booth, 1991). There are several reasons for this development. First, in post-World War II international order, there have been a number of developments both at ideological and structural level that have strengthened global norms against war. Secondly, the imperatives of globalization and resultant interdependence, expansion of mass media, information technology, emphasis on trade and development have created an environment where armed conflicts and wars are not encouraged. Thirdly, the evolving and expanding global security governance, despite all its limitations, has been effective in driving down the number of armed conflicts in contemporary international order. Fourthly, the revolution in military affairs (RMA) has made war a very costly affair. The destructive potential of nuclear weapons and the large number of nuclear weapons states has limited the scope of conventional conflict. As a result, the possible lethality and destruction caused by conventional war is often greater than the objectives to be achieved. Therefore, conventional armed conflicts for achievement of political objectives have become untenable. (K Subrahmanyam, 1997, p.41).

In such a situation, intra-state armed conflicts or internal conflicts of various types occur. Low intensity conflicts, sub-conventional wars, insurgency, terrorism, revolutionary war, proxy war etc have become far more common than inter-state wars. As Liddle Hart says, "This is the only kind of war that fits the condition of modern age. (Quoted in Frank Kitson, 1971, p.16). States also prefer achieving their objectives through such conflicts because they can be initiated at modest cost, can be protracted and also offer deniability to the perpetrating states. Plural democracies, multi-cultural and multi-lingual societies are more prone to such conflicts because internal differences can be used as factors to be exploited to hurt a country, to break its unity, fragment it, create insurgency, terrorism and other social turbulences.

This changing nature of armed conflicts is evident when we examine such conflicts in the context of South Asia. Though the region has witnessed inter-state armed conflicts between India- Pakistan and India-China, most common and frequent armed conflicts have been intra-state conflicts, in the form of insurgencies, terrorism, ethnic and sectarian conflicts, within states in which non-state actors are one of the parties to the conflict. In most of

these armed conflicts, non-state actors get support from state actors as part of their strategic objective. Thus, South Asia is an important example of this obliteration of distinction between state and non-state actors. For example, conflicts between India and Pakistan are an important example where non-state actors have become an integral part of state objectives to achieve their political and strategic objectives.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Identify factors that condition nature and intensity of armed conflicts in international system.

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- 2) What are the most dominant forms of armed conflicts in the contemporary international order?

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10.3 CONTEMPORARY ARMED CONFLICTS IN SOUTH ASIA

10.3.1 Armed Conflicts between India and Pakistan

The end of British rule over the Indian subcontinent in August 1947 and the emergence of incompatible vision of nationalities based on two-nation theory resulted in the emergence of two independent sovereign states named India and Pakistan on the basis of two-nation theory.¹In spite of the fact that the sub-continent had passed through centuries of the common political, social, cultural, economic history, which led to the development of a multi-layer of common strategic and socialisation process of both the entities, creation of Pakistan, process of partition and resultant violence created permanent faultlines between the two countries. Since 1947, mutual suspicion and hostilities between India and Pakistan not only resulted in direct armed conflicts between the two countries, but also caused a number of internal armed conflicts in India in the form of proxy war, hybrid war and support to terrorism and insurgency in India.

Independence of India also brought with itself a very complex issue of future of 566 princely states and their merger into the Indian federal structure.

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1. Core of the two-nation theory is belief that Hindus and Muslims are separate nations that can not coexist together. Muslims should have their own separate homeland, outside the India that existed during the British rule, in which Islam would be the dominant religion. The two-nation theory was advocated by All India Muslim League and its leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah, which became the founding principle of creation of Pakistan. More than religion it was political articulation of Muslim separate identity, in which the British colonial policies played a crucial role.

While issues of merger of princely states were resolved through a judicious mix of political, diplomatic and military approach, the issue of merger of Jammu and Kashmir remained unresolved due to Pakistan's policy and lack of farsightedness by the then Indian leadership.

Pakistan's refusal to accept merger of Jammu and Kashmir with India led to the first armed conflict between India and Pakistan in 1947, when Pakistan intruders disguised as 'tribal volunteers' along with Pakistan's regular troops invaded the state with an objective to annex it. It was only after the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession in October 1947 and requested military assistance from India, which was provided and invasion was repulsed. The conflict ended when a ceasefire, brokered by UN, was arranged in January 1949 and a ceasefire line was, now called the Line of Control (LoC) was established. Despite having a military edge, the decision of the Indian leadership for ceasefire and referring the matter to UN has been criticised by many as it kept the problem of Jammu and Kashmir alive between the two countries, causing subsequent problems which the region continues to confront.

Lack of proper resolution of the first India-Pakistan war encouraged Pakistan further to continue its efforts to secure a favorable outcome with regard to Jammu and Kashmir through a military solution. The outcome of 1962 war with China which weakened morale of Indian armed forces and support from the US as part of the Cold War dynamics prompted Pakistan to plan another aggression in 1965. In August 1965, Pakistani soldiers crossed the LoC into the state in an attempt to start an insurgency, termed as 'Operation Gibraltar', against India². The operation was not successful because of strong retaliation by India. The conflict ended when a cease-fire was agreed upon with effect from 23 September 1965 with UN efforts and the Tashkent Declaration and the subsequent agreement between the two countries.

The third India-Pakistan armed conflict in 1971 was caused by internal political developments in Pakistan and their spill over effects on India. Though the partition was on the basis of two-nation theory, the trajectory of Pakistan as a state could not reconcile these internal contradictions within the overarching ideology of Pakistan based on two-nation theory. This became visible after rise of Bengali nationalism in East Pakistan. The situation became explosive after absolute majority in the elections in 1971, the Awami League insisted upon autonomy for East Pakistan. The military rulers of West Pakistan responded with a military crack-down and repression. Consequently, about ten million East Pakistanis fled to India. Pakistan sought to internationalise the issue by attacking India on 3 December 1971. The war ended on 16 December 1971 after surrender of Pakistani troops and creation of Bangladesh. The two-nation theory was refuted after 23 years after partition with the emergence of Bangladesh as a separate sovereign, independent nation.

2. Operation Gibraltar was the codename of a military operation planned and executed by the Pakistan Army in Jammu and Kashmir in August 1965, with an objective to covertly cross LoC and instigate local Kashmiri people to revolt against India. Such a rebellion, it was believed, would provide rationale for Pakistan's military intervention and internationalise the issue.

The Kargil Conflict, also known as, ‘Operation Vijay’ was fought between the two countries from May to July 1999 in Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir to repulse armed intrusion by terrorists and Pakistani army regulars in the mountainous region of the state. The Indian Army, later supported by the Indian Air Force, recaptured a majority of the positions on the Indian side of the LoC. The Kargil conflict is an example of active military collaboration between state and non-state actors.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) ‘What was Operation Gibraltar’?

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2) List major inter-state armed conflicts between India and Pakistan.

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10.4 INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICTS IN INDIA INVOLVING NON-STATE ACTORS

More serious than direct armed conflicts between India and Pakistan, in terms of loss of lives and property, India has been facing several such conflicts waged by non-state actors. Prominent among them are in Jammu and Kashmir as part of proxy war by Pakistan, multiple insurgencies and ethnic conflicts in India’s Northeast and Left-Wing Extremist, also known as Maoist or Naxalite movements in parts of India’s hinterland. As far as number of non-state groups involved in these conflicts are concerned, they are among 42 groups banned by Government of India under the First Schedule of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967 for engaging in or supporting armed struggle against the state. However, many of these groups listed are not active currently and are not directly involved in armed conflict, and some of them may be acting as facilitators or involved in violent activities of less intensity. According to SATP data, between 2000 and 2020 more than 45,000 persons, including 13949 civilians, 7268 security force personnel, 23024 terrorists and 1195 unspecified persons were killed in the violence caused by activities of these groups. A brief description of such conflicts that India has faced recently is given below:

10.4.1 Jammu and Kashmir

Pakistan’s inability to secure Jammu and Kashmir through direct military confrontation has made the state as the principal theatre of proxy war. The state has been facing sustained insurgency and terrorist movement since late 1980s. Apart from internal political factors, including those relating to political mismanagement, factionalism within polity, allegations of electoral malpractices and corruption, armed conflicts in the state have been

conditioned by security environment in India's western neighbourhood. Nature of current phase of armed conflicts in the state can be traced back to the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in 1979, which led to the creation of infrastructure for religious extremism in Pakistan and its use as state policy by the US and Pakistan. (Pervez Hoodbhoy, 2005). Radical Islamist extremists popularly known as *Mujahideens* were trained in Madrassas in Pakistan with support from the US and Saudi Arabia to fight against Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Even after withdrawal of Soviet Union from Afghanistan in 1989 and subsequent US disengagement from the region, Pakistan continued with its policy of using religious extremism for securing strategic interest against India. One can draw parallels between developments in Afghanistan in 1980s and 1990 and resurgence of insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. Since then, armed conflict in the state had a distinct element of religious extremism and linkage of terrorist groups operating in Jammu and Kashmir with Global Jihadi network.

10.4.2 Major Non-State Actors in the State

The Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Hizbul Mujahadeen (HM) are principal non-state actors involved in the armed conflict in Jammu and Kashmir. These groups are Pakistan-based and use religious extremism as principal method for mobilising people with an objective of merger of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan.

The LeT is the most prominent and largest Pakistan-based terrorist organisation operating in Jammu and Kashmir since 1990s. With headquarters at Muridke, Pakistan the group was founded in late 1980s by Hafiz Saeed, designated as terrorist by UN. Saeed also heads Jamat-ud-Dawa, registered in Pakistan as charity and educational institution. Banned in India, US, UK, EU and Canada, the LeT has also been designated as terrorist organisation by UN. Though officially banned in Pakistan since 2002, activities of groups are widely reported in Pakistan and reported to be maintaining close links with Pakistan's external intelligence agency, the ISI. Reports also suggest its close linkage with Taliban and Al Qaeda. (Christine C Fair, 2019) It has been involved in a number of major terrorist attacks in India, the most prominent being the multiple attacks in Mumbai on 26 November 2008 by 10 of its cadres, in which 175 persons were killed and more than 300 injured.

The JeM is a Pakistan-based Deobandi group with an objective to merge the Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan. With its headquarters at Bahawalpur, Pakistan, the group was founded in Pakistan in 2000 by Maulana Masood Azhar, one of the terrorists released after hijacking of Indian Airlines aircraft in 1999. The group is responsible for a number of terrorist attacks in India, including attack on Indian Parliament in 2001 and more recently terrorist attack on security forces in Pulwama in February 2019 in which 42 personnel of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were killed. As part of larger global jihadi network, JeM is also reported to have maintained close relations with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

The HM, headed by Mohammad Yusuf Shah aka Syed Salahuddin, has its headquarters at Muzaffarabad, PoK. It is one of the earliest groups in Jammu and Kashmir to openly advocate religious extremism and *Jihad*. It

has been designated a terrorist group in India, US, EU and Canada. Among the terrorist groups operating in the state, HM has been able to enlist largest number of local supporters. One of its prominent local leaders, BurhanWani was killed in an encounter with security forces in July 2016. The death of BurhanWani was followed by a surge in the number of terrorist incidents in South Kashmir with considerable local support.

This sustained terrorist campaign has resulted in killing of thousands of innocent people. According to data compiled by SATP, between 2000 and 2020, a total of 21582 persons were killed in 11588 incidents of killings, that includes 4843 civilians, 3481 security force personnel, 12840 terrorists and 418 unspecified persons. The intensity of violence in this conflict fluctuates with changes in domestic, bilateral, regional and international geopolitical and security environment.

Armed conflict in Jammu and Kashmir also led to the possibility of escalation into direct military conflict with Pakistan. In September 2016, in response to killing of 18 security force personnel on an army base at Uri, Indian troops carried out 'surgical strikes' on terrorist camps inside PoK causing considerable damage to terrorist infrastructure. Again, in February 2019, India conducted air strikes on a terrorist training camp of JeM in Balakot, Pakistan. The surgical strike by Indian Air Force was in response to the 14 Feb 2019 terrorist attack near Awantipura in Pulwama district, in which 42 CRPF personnel were killed. These strikes not only sent a stern signal to Pakistan that India will no longer exercise its policy of strategic patience with Pakistan and any terrorist attack will invite swift military action. Till now, India exercised restraints in crossing LoC because of the apprehension that limited military confrontation may escalate into bigger confrontation between two nuclear powered states.

Security situation due to armed conflict in the state is gradually improving, particularly after 05 August 2019, when the Indian Parliament changed the status of the state through amendment in Article 370 of Indian Constitution revoking semi-autonomous status of the state and revoked Article 35 A of Indian Constitution.³ However, concerns remain because of evolving security environment in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Though it would be premature at this juncture to make any definite assessment on impact of emerging situation in Afghanistan and policies of Taliban on Kashmir, developments in India's western neighbourhood are likely to have an impact on the situation of armed conflict in Jammu and Kashmir.

10.4.3 Armed Conflict by CPI-Maoist

Inspired by the ideology of Chinese communist leader, Mao tse Tung's theory of organised peasant armed insurrection using guerrilla war, Left-Wing Extremists, also known as Maoists/Naxalites have been waging protracted

3. Article 370 of the Indian Constitution limited the powers of Indian Parliament over the Jammu and Kashmir and exempted the state from full applicability of the constitution. The state received a separate constitution and flag, and its chief executive was called the Prime Minister. In 1954, Article 35 A to the Indian Constitution was introduced, which empowered state legislature to define state's permanent residents, who were given special rights and privileges. To safeguard the unique culture and identity of the state, non permanent residents were barred from acquiring land in the state.

armed conflict against Indian state since late 1960s. The movement started in Naxalbari area of Darjeeling district of West Bengal, and subsequently spread to different parts of the country. Since then, the movement witnessed many ups and downs but has been able to sustain protracted armed conflict to achieve their ideological objective to establish 'People's Democracy', through armed revolution. (Sumanta Banerjee, 1984)

The current phase of Naxalite movement can be traced back to the formation of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), CPI-Maoist in 2004. As per data compiled by SATP, the movement reached its peak in the early 2010s when it was able to establish its influence over vast swathe of territory, as many as 220 districts in 13 states. Affected states include Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and certain areas in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. In terms of killing between 2000 and 2020, as per data compiled by SATP, 10720 persons lost their lives in 5017 incidents that includes 3834 civilians, 2571 Security force personnel and 134 Maoists.

However, sustained counterinsurgency operations by security forces were able to contain spread of the movement. Several steps taken by the Government of India and the affected states have ensured significant decline in the Maoist violence and geographical spread of Maoist activities. (Annual Report, 2019-20, MHA, Government of India)

However, despite intense pressure from security forces cadres of the CPI-Maoist continued to maintain their presence in their areas of influence, primarily in Chhattisgarh and neighbouring states using their mobility, expert knowledge of terrain and presence of an elaborate support network both in rural and urban areas and ideological support from many quarters, including a section of intelligentsia. (Armed Conflict Survey, 2020, IISS)

10.4.4 Armed Conflicts in India's North-eastern States

Eight States comprise India's Northeast: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. It is a region of immense diversity in terms of religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic landscape. According to one estimate, there are more than 160 Scheduled Tribes belonging to five different ethnic groups, and a large and diverse non-tribal population as well. (Ajai Sahni, 2002)

Right since the time of India's independence in 1947, the region witnessed multiple insurgencies for demands varying from an independent state, separate statehood, autonomy within the Indian political system, ethnic clashes. These clashes were conditioned by a complex interaction of internal and external factors. Mountainous terrain, the nature of porous borders with Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan and region's strategic vulnerabilities due to narrow 'Siliguri Corridor' connecting it to the rest of India, have played a crucial role in sustaining insurgency in the region. (Lawrence D. Cline, 2006). Available evidence suggests that insurgent groups operating in the region have received ideological and material support from China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and Pakistan at different points in time in varying degrees. (Jaideep Saikia, 2007). Though cooperation with Bangladesh helped contain insurgency situation since installation of Awami League Government in 2009, porous borders with Bangladesh continue to be

used to facilitate large scale illegal migration and thus creating demographic imbalance with serious security implications. Radical Islamist mobilisation has emerged as a serious challenge to India's security. Reports also suggest that porous borders with the neighbouring countries are being used for drug trafficking creating a situation of 'narco-terrorism'. (Jaideep Saikia, 2006)

The region has the distinction of largest number of groups banned by Government of India under the first schedule of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. Data compiled by SATP suggest that there are 05 proscribed and 12 active groups in Assam, 07 proscribed and 13 active groups in Manipur, 01 proscribed and 11 active groups in Meghalaya, 01 in Mizoram, 02 proscribed and 03 active groups in Nagaland and 02 proscribed groups in Tripura. (SATP)

However, trends in armed conflicts in the region suggest a considerable decline in spread and intensity of insurgencies, particularly since 2010. Mizoram has remained largely free from terrorist violence since the political resolution of the insurgency in this State in 1986. In Tripura, a very effective counterinsurgency operations spearheaded by state police and supported by Central paramilitary forces reduced level of violence and activities of insurgent groups considerably. States like Assam, Manipur and Nagaland also witnessed considerable decline in the level of violence. In these states, insurgencies continue at a lesser scale. (Armed Conflict Survey 2020, IISS).

In Assam, several complex factors have conditioned armed conflicts. Prominent of them are, demand for secessionism by ULFA, separate state by factions of NDFB, demand for autonomy by groups active in Karbi Aanglong and Kamtapur areas, inter-tribal clashes, and activities of Naga groups in certain districts. In addition, large scale illegal immigration from neighbouring countries have created demographic imbalance causing serious problems of radical Islamist mobilisation and terrorism. In recent past, activities of the Neo Jammatt-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (Neo-JMB) were reported in Assam.

Manipur is the state where largest number of armed groups are active. According to data compiled by SATP, there are 07 groups proscribed by Government of India, 13 active groups and two groups are under peace negotiations. Insurgency related deaths continue to decline in the state. Data suggest that the state is going through a phase of consolidation of peace with continuous decline in insurgency related killings. In 2020, the state reported seven killings, including one civilian, three security force personnel and three insurgents in armed conflicts. (SATP, 2021).

Apart from successful counterinsurgency operations, surrender cum rehabilitation policies were introduced by the state to encourage armed groups to join political mainstream, which yielded positive results despite periodic reports of armed groups violating provisions of ceasefire and indulging in extortion, recruitment drives and other subversive activities. Future of armed conflicts in Manipur would depend, to a considerable extent, on expanding the current peace process to bring groups outside the purview of talks.

After Mizoram, the Naga peace process could be another example of successful resolution of insurgency through negotiations. In 1997 and 2001

the government ended its operations against the NSCN-IM and NSCN-K respectively leading to a violent but stable co-existence between the state and armed groups. In 2015, the Government of India and NSCN-IM signed 'Framework Agreement' and resolved to address the protracted armed conflicts through peace process. However, due to differences over issues such as separate flag and constitution demanded by NSCN-IM, based on a 'unique Naga history the peace talks are yet to reach any definite conclusion. The peace processes have had positive results despite periodic reports of armed groups violating provisions of ceasefire and indulging in extortion, recruitment drives and other subversive activities.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Name some of the major non-state armed terrorist actors active in Jammu and Kashmir.

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- 2) Describe the major terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir in February 2019. Which organisation was responsible for the attack..

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- 3) Why is 05 August 2019 an important date in the recent history of Jammu and Kashmir?

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- 4) What is the main objective of CPI-Maoist?

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10.5 ARMED CONFLICTS INVOLVING NON-STATE ACTORS IN PAKISTAN

Since the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, both India and Pakistan pursued different political trajectory, that also shaped the other aspects of the society. As Huntington highlighted these differences into Pakistan's predisposition toward Islam and its incompatibility with democracy, while Kothari argued Hinduism's propensity toward democracy, which act as catalyst factors in their subsequent trajectory and dynamic of both nations (Maceo Bruce Darby, 2013). Political trajectory in Pakistan was also to great

extent shaped by a host of internal political factors such as the early death of Jinnah, colonial legacy, weak political parties, social conservatism, and outside influences gave the Pakistani army an increasingly strong influence over the state (Philip Oldenburg, 2010). Geographically, Pakistan is located at the margin of the three Sub-continent such as South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. As the result, the major armed conflicts in the adjoining sub-continent have spill over effects on Pakistani society. The dynamic of inter-states, intra-state and non-state actor conflicts in Pakistan has been greatly stimulated by religious fundamentalism, the politicisation of Islam, ethnic antagonism and threat perception, sectarian militancy, and external influences (Sanjeeb K. Mohanty, 2009). The factors provide a fertile ground for the emergence of Pakistan as a safe haven for various terrorists and insurgent groups. The failure of Pakistan leadership to tackle the menace of “strategic deficiencies” in countering money laundering and terrorist financing led its inclusion into ‘grey list’ of countries by the Paris-based intergovernmental Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 2018 and since then its status remained unchanged (Congressional Research Service, 2021).

According to Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Pakistan has witnessed approximately 42777 deaths for the period of 1989-2020. In which death in the state-based violence are 34537, followed by 4379 deaths in one-sided violence and 3861 deaths in non-state actor violence. The number of total deaths has been substantially lowered from 1989 to 2006, followed by the phase of steep rise during 2007-2010 and reached at in 2009 with 7460 deaths in a year, then onward started decline but still constitute considerably higher deaths than the subsequent period of steep decline from 2018 onward (Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, 2021).

10.5.1 Non-State Actors in Armed Conflicts

According to Congressional Research Service (CRS) report 2021, Pakistan has been the base of operation or target of armed non-state actors of at least 12 globally designated foreign terrorist organisations. The report has further categorised these organisations into five categories on the basis of their objective-driven-orientation: like globally-oriented, Afghanistan-oriented, India-oriented, domestic-oriented and sectarian- (anti-Shia) oriented. As per the report, globally-oriented enlisted groups are Al Qaeda, Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP or IS-K)(Congressional Research Service, 2021). Afghanistan oriented groups are the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network (HQN), while the most active India oriented terrorist groups are Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), and HizbulMujahideen (HM). The details on these three categories of the terrorist group are elaborated in sub-section on India and Afghanistan. In this sub-section, the focus is on domestically oriented terrorist groups of Pakistan.

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP): Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan is the most prominent and deadliest domestically oriented terrorist organisation of Pakistan. The group was formed in 2007 under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud with an objective of the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Pakistan. Its three operational goals are the enforcement of Shariah Law in Pakistan, establishing a unified front to combat the US-

led coalition forces in Afghanistan; and conducting defence jihad against Pakistani security agencies (Hassan Abbas, 2008). As per various estimates, the total strength of the group is between 3000-6000 (CRS Report, 2021). The group came into the limelight when Faisal Shahzad, who received training from the group, carried out an attack by detonating a car bomb in May 2010 at New York's Times Square in May 2010. It also accepted the responsibility to attempt to kill Malala Yousufzai in 2012 and carried out the deadly attack on an army public school in Peshawar in December 2014 with 139 casualties and 121 injured including children and school staff members. According to Uppsala Conflict Data Program, the group is responsible for nearly 27666 casualties for the period of 2007 to 2020. Out of these total casualties, most of the casualties witnessed during 2008 to 2015, which is 92 per cent of total casualties. The highest number of casualties was in 2009 with nearly 5968. However, from 2015 onward, the number of casualties per year witnessed a sharp decline with 186 in 2020.

10.5.2 Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)

Also known as Baloch Liberation Army, the group is fundamentally an Ethno-nationalist militant group that operates in Baluchistan province, the Southern- Western part of Pakistan and adjoining areas of Afghanistan. Historically, its root lies in the third phase of the Baloch Insurgency, with the objective of Baluchistan's quest for independence. It led to the armed insurgency in 1948 by the brother of the erstwhile ruler of the Baloch state of Kalat. Since then, the region has witnessed different phases of insurgency. In order to focus on the Mujahideen-driven movement against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan, President Gen. Zia ul-Haq signed a peace deal with various factions of the Baloch militants such as Marris, the Bugtis, the Bizenjos and the Mengal. However, the peace was broken in the wake of an offensive military operation launched by the then President Pervez Musharraf. The host of factors provided a fertile ground for the emergence of the BLA such as underdevelopment of province, lack of political participation in the federal government, sustained resource exploitation and economic marginalisation of the Baloch people by Pakistan (Rajshree Jetly, 2006). The prime objective is to seek independence from Pakistan and establish a state of 'Greater Balochistan' (Srijan Shukla, 2020).

According to Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, BLA was responsible for the total 564 deaths casualties from 2004 to 2018. BLA had mainly targeted development activity, Pakistanis and foreigners who were involved in vital economic projects. BLA had carried out a frequent act of sabotage of gas pipelines and attacked personnel laying gas transmission lines. BLA recent high-profile acts include suicide attacks and killings of Chinese engineers as a protest against China's growing presence in Balochistan. The latest attack carried out by BLA was a self-sacrificing attack on the Pakistani Stock Exchange in Karachi on 29th June 2020 and a series of attacks on Chinese engineers and infrastructure related to the ambitious projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the Chinese initiatives for Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Check Your Progress 4

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

- ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.
- 1) Name major globally-oriented jihadi terrorist groups operating from Pakistan
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-
-
- 2) What is the major objective of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)?
-
-
-
- 3) Name the organisation which has been alleged to be involved in attacks on Chinese officials in Pakistan
-
-
-

10.6 CONTEMPORARY ARMED CONFLICTS IN AFGHANISTAN

10.6.1 Armed Conflicts in Afghanistan

Geopolitical location of the country, imperatives of regional and global politico-security environment, involvement of extra-regional powers and role of Pakistan are major factors that have conditioned the trajectory of armed conflicts in Afghanistan. According to data compiled by Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), the country was among the two deadliest armed conflicts in the world in 2019, the other being Syria (Júlia Palik, Siri Aas Rustad, Fredrik Methi, 2020). Afghanistan recorded about 40% of all casualties in such conflicts across the world in 2020 (Trends in Armed Conflicts, 2021).

The difficult physical terrain of Afghanistan not only made it difficult for external power intervention but also brought a militant tribal culture. As a result, successive empires failed to establish its control over Afghanistan. The region has earned the nickname of “Graveyard of Empires”. (Akhilesh Pillalamarri, 2017) The country was a theatre of great game of empires.⁴ In the 20th century also, particularly during the Cold War, interventions of

4 The ‘Great Game’ is generally refers to political and diplomatic confrontation that existed in most of the 19th century between the British empire and the Russian empire over Afghanistan and neighbouring countries in Central and South Asia. Russia was fearful of British commercial and military inroads into Central Asia and Britain was fearful of Russia adding India to Russian empire. This resulted in an atmosphere of distrust and constant fear of war between the two empires. The British policies to protect all approaches to India and the great game is how the British did this in terms of a possible Russian threat. For details see Ingram, Edward, “Great Britain’s Great Game: An Introduction”. The International History Review. Taylor & Francis, Ltd. 2 (2), (April 1980), pp. 160–171.

extra-regional powers for global political imperatives resulted in armed conflicts in Afghanistan. (Gregory Fremont-Barnes, 2014).

In the last four decades, Afghanistan has been affected by multiple and overlapping armed conflicts. Groups driven by religious extremist ideology have been a constant feature in Afghanistan right since the Soviet invasion in 1979. After Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Taliban came to power following a protracted civil war in 1996. The Taliban government, recognised only by a few countries, including Pakistan represented a government of radical Islamist extremists which supported and gave shelter to terrorist groups including Al Qaeda, which was responsible for terrorist attacks in the US on 09 September 2001. The 'War on Terror' started after the Taliban government refused to hand over Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, responsible for 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US. The armed conflict ended in August 2021, after 19-year 10 month long armed conflict of Taliban against US, NATO forces and Afghan National Army. According to the Costs of War Project, 176,000 people in Afghanistan were killed in this armed conflict in which 46,319 civilians, 69,095 security personnel and police and approximately 52,893 cadres of Taliban and other armed groups fighting along with it.

10.6.2 Major Landmarks in Conflict

Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011 in a military operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan where he was hiding. His killing brought to the light, once again, support Al Qaeda was getting from Pakistan. The protracted conflict and its related cost in terms of loss of lives and financial resources triggered a debate in the US about sustainability of this conflict and securing a favourable outcome. The US-led coalition formally ended its combat mission in 2014 and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) was put in charge of Afghanistan's security, with logistics support from US-led forces. The Taliban continued with sustained attacks on ANDSF, rural districts and urban centres. One of the major reasons for Taliban's survival and gaining strength was support from Pakistan. Pakistan while retaining the status of major non-NATO ally in war against terror was working on its own strategy of using Taliban and Haqqani network for strategic depth in Afghanistan.

In Feb 2020, after more than a year of direct negotiations, the US government and the Taliban signed a peace agreement that set the timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Under the agreement, the United States pledged withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in a phased manner in 14 months. In return, the Taliban pledged to prevent territory under its control from being used by terrorist groups against any country and enter into negotiations with the government in Kabul. In complete violation of Doha accord of Feb 2020, the Taliban, instead of facilitating smooth power transition and installation of an inclusive government intensified its attacks in a bid to capture power on its own terms. Gradually, the Taliban gained control of almost all the provinces in Afghanistan and on August 15, 2021, Taliban fighters entered the capital, leading Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to flee the country and the Afghan government to collapse. On 7 September 2021, the Taliban announced the formation of an interim government in Afghanistan, led by Mohammad Hasan Akhund. Five of the Ministers in the Taliban government are designated terrorist in the list of US

and UN. Composition of the new Taliban government suggest that Pakistan played an important role in the formation of the government to secure its strategic interests in Pakistan and ensure that India, a long-term partner of Afghanistan, does not get a foothold in the new Afghan dispensation. The speed of the Taliban's territorial gains and collapse of both the ANDSF and Afghan government surprised U.S. officials and allies—as well as, reportedly, the Taliban itself—despite earlier intelligence assessments of the situation on the ground.

Even after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, prospects for lasting peace continues to elude Afghanistan. Reports of armed conflict continues to be reported between the Taliban and the resistance forces loyal to the ousted government. The group was controlling the Panjshir Valley. Though the Taliban have claimed that the Panjshir valley is under their control, there are conflicting reports about the status of resistance forces.

The new Taliban government has not yet been recognised by the international community as there are growing concerns over the nature of government, status of minorities and other ethnic groups, issues related to human rights, women's right and earlier Taliban commitment not to allow Afghan territory for terrorist activities in other countries. Since the situation is evolving fast, it would be premature to comment on the prospects of lasting peace in Afghanistan. However, there are serious concerns over Afghanistan, once again, turning into a terrorist safe haven. Moreover, increasing internal instability, a mass exodus of refugees, and a growing humanitarian crisis could have regional ramifications as neighboring countries respond. In addition, Pakistan, India, Iran, and Russia are all likely to compete for influence in Kabul and with subnational actors.

10.6.3 Major Non-State Groups active in Afghanistan

Between 2001 and August 2021, Taliban were the most prominent non-state actor involved in armed conflict. Formation of government by Taliban signifies transition of non-state to state actor. However, this process of transition was not smooth and the country continues to face challenges from non-state armed groups.

10.6.4 Al Qaeda

Since its formation in 1988 by Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda has been a major component of global jihadist movement. The group maintained close linkage with Taliban since 1996 and during Taliban's fight against US-led forces between 2001 and 2021. The group welcomed installation of Taliban government and has not claimed responsibility of any major terrorist attack in Afghanistan since then. As per some estimates the group maintains approximately 1000 armed cadres in South Asia.

10.6.5 Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP)

Formally affiliated to the ISIS or ISIL, it extended its military operations to Afghanistan in 2015, with an objective to establish Caliphate in Central and South Asia. The initial members primarily comprised disgruntled and estranged members of the TTP. Areas of operation of this group include primarily in Nangarhar province, but it also maintains presence in Kunar, Logar, Zabul, Farah and Helmand provinces. IS-KP is the only major terrorist

group that remains active after the installation of Taliban government in Afghanistan. On 26 August 2019, an estimated 183 persons, including 170 Afghan civilians and 13 members of US military were killed in a suicide attack at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. The group continues its armed conflict against Taliban-led government in Afghanistan.

Check Your Progress 5

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Why has Afghanistan been nicknamed as 'Graveyard of Empires'?

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2) In which year did the Soviet Union invade Afghanistan?

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3) When was the 'Peace Agreement' between the US and Taliban was signed?

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10.7 ARMED CONFLICTS IN SRI LANKA AND NEPAL

The armed conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) between 1983 and 2009, has been one of the most serious armed conflicts in South Asia in terms of its intensity and number of killings. Genesis of this armed conflict can be traced back to persisting tensions between the dominant Sinhala group, comprising approximately 82% of the population and Tamils, with approximately 9.4 % of population, since it became independent from British rule in 1948. Issues such as colonial legacy and perception of Tamil population about domination and subjugation by Sinhalese majority state got strengthened by a series of policies that the Sri Lankan government adopted after independence.

The LTTE was the principal armed group involved in the conflict. Formed in 1976 by Velupillai Prabhakaran, the LTTE fought against the Sinhala majority Sri Lankan government with an objective to create an independent Tamil state aka Tamil Eelam. During the armed conflict, the LTTE gained notoriety for being one of the deadliest terrorist organisations, carrying out numerous suicide attacks against civilians of all ethnicities, using child soldiers, assassinations of politicians and military targets. LTTE was also responsible for killing of former Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, in a suicide attack in Tamil Nadu in May 1991. The group also killed Sri Lankan president, Ranasinghe Premadasa

According to an estimate by an UN panel approximately 40,000 persons were killed in civil war in Sri Lanka. Other reports estimated the number of civilian death to approximately 100,000. (Krista Mahr, 2013). After a 26 year military campaign, the Sri Lankan military defeated the LTTE in May 2009, bringing the civil war to an end. Since the end of the armed conflict, Sri Lankan government has been subject to serious global criticism for violating human rights and committing war crimes through attacks and killings of civilians.

Strategically located between India and China as a landlocked buffer country, Nepal witnessed a protracted armed conflict from 1996 to 2006 between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Government of Nepal. Historically, Nepal had been governed by a system of monarchy, which periodically witnessed popular protests for democracy. Multi-party parliamentary democracy was experimented in the country under the constitutional monarchy. Along with clamour for democracy a number of internal issues related to underdevelopment, governance deficit and poverty created conditions for armed conflict.

The CPN-Maoist was the principal non-state armed actor party to the conflict with an objective of overthrowing the Nepalese monarchy and establishing a people's republic. In March 1995 the CPN (Maoist) started agitations and preparations and plans for 'People's war' against the state. In 1996, the CPN-Maoist submitted a 40-point demand to the Government which addressed a wide range of social, economic and political agendas. The same year, the party launched an armed insurgency against the Government. Gradually the insurgency developed into an intense arm conflict and engulfed almost each of 75 districts in Nepal.

The insurgency left at least 13,000 people dead and 1,300 missing. (UNHCR, 2012). The armed conflict ended on 21 November 2006 with signing of Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) by CPN-Maoist. Monarchy was abolished and Nepal was declared a republic. The CPN-Maoist joined mainstream politics, participated in elections and also headed the government in Nepal. The armed conflict in Nepal is one of the rare examples in South Asia where a protracted insurgency ended through a peace process with insurgent group participating in electoral politics.

Check Your Progress 6

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) When was the LTTE formed and who was its leader?

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2) Identify the period and major parties of armed conflict in Nepal

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10.8 SUMMARY AND EMERGING TRENDS

Historically inter-state armed conflicts or conventional wars between/among nations have been seen as the dominant form of armed conflicts. However, in contemporary global order such conflicts are becoming less prevalent due to global norms against war, interdependence among nations in a globalised world, technological advancements making wars costly affairs and imperatives of global trade and economic development.

Intra-state or internal conflicts have become most dominant form of armed conflicts in contemporary and emerging international order. Mostly they occur in the form of low intensity conflicts, insurgency, terrorism, revolutionary war, protracted war, proxy war, hybrid wars etc. Such conflicts are likely to remain dominant form of conflicts and one of the preferred options for nation state to achieve their political objective for which they resorted to war in the past.

South Asia, as one of such societies, is an example not only of a complex theatre of armed conflicts but also a region with immense potential to contribute to existing and emerging international order in areas of security and economy.

With emergence of China as global power in the existing US-led global order, importance of South Asia as a region is likely to increase both as a balancer and theatre of both conventional and unconventional conflicts. Therefore, existing and emerging trends in armed conflicts in the region are likely to have significant implications for global security order.

Though South Asia witnessed inter-state armed conflicts between India-Pakistan and India-China, most common and frequent armed conflicts have been intra-state conflicts, in which non-state actors are one of the parties to the conflict. In most of these armed conflicts, non-state actors often get support from state actors as part of their strategic objective. Thus, South Asia is an important example of this obliteration of distinction between state and non-state actors. South Asia has also been witnessing conflicts generated by great power interventions with Afghanistan being the most prominent example.

Armed conflicts between India-Pakistan conflicts have been most intractable since 1947, generating multiple armed conflicts. Mutual suspicion and hostilities between the two countries not only resulted in direct armed conflicts between the two countries, but also caused a number of internal armed conflicts in India, prominently in Jammu and Kashmir.

In addition, multiple insurgencies and ethnic conflicts in India's Northeast and Left-Wing Extremist, also known as Maoist or Naxalite movements in parts of India's hinterland have been major armed conflicts in India. However, trends in armed conflicts in India suggest a considerable decline in their spread and intensity in almost every theatre.

In terms of their spread, intensity and impact on regional and global security architecture, Afghanistan and Pakistan have been among the most affected countries afflicted by multiple armed conflicts. Imperatives of regional and global politico-security environment, involvement of extra-regional power

and role of Pakistan have major factors that have conditioned the trajectory of armed conflicts in Afghanistan.

The armed conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) between 1983 and 2009, has been one of the most serious armed conflicts in South Asia in terms of its intensity and number of killings. The conflict ended with decisive military victory of Sri Lankan government over LTTE

Nepal witnessed a protracted armed conflict from 1996 to 2006 between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Government of Nepal. The conflict ended with political agreement between CPN-Maoist and Nepali government which abolished monarchy in Nepal and facilitated Maoist participation in mainstream politics. Both Sri Lanka and Nepal present different models of conflict resolution.

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10.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Historically the nature and intensity of armed conflicts have been conditioned by structure of international system, relationship among

its constituent units, technological advancements, strategy, and tactics employed and objectives to be achieved in such conflicts.

- 2) Intra-state armed conflicts or internal conflicts of various types have emerged as the most dominant forms of armed conflicts. They occur mostly in the form of low intensity conflicts, sub-conventional wars, insurgency, terrorism, revolutionary war, proxy war etc. and have become far more common than inter-state wars.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Operation Gibraltar was the codename of a military operation planned and executed by the Pakistan Army in Jammu and Kashmir in August 1965, with an objective to covertly cross LoC and instigate local Kashmiri people to revolt against India. Such a rebellion, it was believed, would provide rationale for Pakistan's military intervention and internationalise the issue.
- 2) Major armed inter-state armed conflicts between India and Pakistan occurred in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Laskhar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) are among the major non-state armed terrorist actors active in Jammu and Kashmir
- 2) JeM was responsible for terrorist attack on security forces in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir in February 2019 in which 42 personnel of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were killed.
- 3) On 5 August 2019, the Indian Parliament changed the status of the state through amendment in Article 370 of Indian Constitution revoking semi-autonomous status of the state and revoked Article 35 A of Indian Constitution. Article 370 of the Indian Constitution limited the powers of Indian Parliament over the Jammu and Kashmir and exempted the state from full applicability of the Indian Constitution. In 1954, Article 35 A to the Indian Constitution was introduced, which empowered state legislature to define state's permanent residents, who were given special rights and privileges.
- 4) Main objective of the CPI-Maoist is to establish a communist state, which they call 'People's Democracy' through armed revolution using protracted armed struggle and guerrilla warfare.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Major globally-oriented jihadi terrorist groups operating from Pakistan are Qaeda, Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP or IS-K)
- 2) Major objective of the TTP is the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Pakistan.
- 3) The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) is alleged to have been involved in attacks on Chinese engineers and infrastructure related to the ambitious projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the Chinese initiatives for Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) The difficult physical terrain of Afghanistan not only made it difficult for external power intervention but also brought a culture of militant tribal culture. As a result, successive empires failed to establish its control over Afghanistan. The region has earned the nickname of “Graveyard of Empires”.
- 2) The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979.
- 3) The Peace Agreement between the US and the Taliban was signed in February 2020 in Doha.

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) The LTTE was the principal armed group involved in the conflict. Formed in 1976 by Velupillai Prabhakaran,
- 2) Nepal witnessed a protracted armed conflict from 1996 to 2006 between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Government of Nepal.



UNIT 11: TERRITORIAL DISPUTES

Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introductions
- 11.2 Territorial Disputes and Their Meaning
 - 11.2.1 Variants of Territorial Disputes
- 11.3 Theoretical Explanation of Territorial Disputes
- 11.4 Bilateral Territorial Disputes
- 11.5 Territorial Disputes between India and Pakistan
 - 11.5.1 Jammu & Kashmir
 - 11.5.2 Sir Creek
 - 11.5.3 Baglihar Dam
 - 11.5.4 Siachen Glacier
- 11.6 India/China Disputes
- 11.7 India/Nepal Disputes
 - 11.7.1 Lipulekh
 - 11.7.2 Susta
- 11.8 Bangladesh - India Disputes
- 11.9 India / Sri Lanka Disputes
- 11.10 Bangladesh / Myanmar Disputes
- 11.11 Bhutan /China Dispute
 - 11.11.1 Doklam
- 11.12 Pakistan and Afghanistan Disputes
 - 11.12.1 Demand for Pashunistan
- 11.13 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.14 References
- 11.15 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercise

11.0 OBJECTIVES

The previous unit discussed the armed conflicts in South Asia with a view to comprehend the ethnic and religious complexities of these nations, the diversity of various social groups as well as the region's cultural faultlines. The purpose of the present Unit is to familiarise you with the nature and scope of territorial disputes in the region. Following the completion of this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the reasons for unresolved boundary questions;
- Comprehend the meaning of territorial conflicts and the factors that cause them;

- Describe the various types of territorial disputes, as well as their conceptual and theoretical underpinnings; and
- List the issues of bilateral disputes.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Territorial disputes in South Asia continue to pose threat to the region's peace, security, and development. Because most of the nation-states' borders were drawn during British colonial rule, territorial disputes in South Asia remain fiercely fought, fragile, and chaotic. The colonial masters' primary concern was to protect the empire's interests rather than draw a boundary to assess the region's future potential. The main goal was to protect the empire's natural borders from Czarist Russia. The region became more conflict-prone as a result of post-colonial governments' conflicting claims and counter-claims during and after the development of a contrived and ambiguous state system. The tumultuous process of post-colonial nation-building and their contentious territorial claims were exacerbated by the ambiguous position of its ethnic and religious minorities and social groups.

Both India and Pakistan claim Kashmir in its entirety, yet only control a portion of it. Since 1950, China has controlled the eastern-most part of it. On the basis of a 1947 instrument of accession, India claims the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir. In Kashmir, India's claim extends to Pakistan-controlled Gilgit-Baltistan and the Wakhan Corridor on the Afghan side. It resurrects India's hopes of regaining access to the old silk route by opening the country's entrance to Central Asia. Given the Wakhan Corridor's strategic significance, Indian strategic circle and politicians including the current Home Minister Amit Shah, have pledged to regain the entire Kashmir as part of India.

Pakistan, on the other hand, claims much of Kashmir's region as its own, citing the Muslim-majority population as justification. Pakistan claims that India's hold and administration of Kashmir is illegitimate. Pakistan regards Kashmir as an unfinished partition agenda. Pakistan claims that territorial conflicts in the region cannot be resolved as long as it does not take all of Kashmir. China claims the Aksai Chin and Shaksagam Valley, which are entirely uninhabited. Many consider the region's never-ending territorial conflicts to be one of the British colonial masters' successful strategies to keep the region disturbed.

Some newly independent nation-states were forced to accept the colonial demarcation of their territorial limits as a *fait accompli* due to the region's tumultuous post-colonial nation-building process. The colonial demarcation was accepted by India as a *fait accompli*. China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, on the other hand, refused to accept it as a *fait accompli* and have repeatedly attempted to redraw the international boundary line inside the region in order to press their claim to land that is believed to be 'naturally' theirs. The McMahon and Durand lines, which demarcate the border between India and China and Pakistan and Afghanistan, respectively, but have yet to be recognised by both, are the two most common examples of the region.

Territorial disputes between neighbouring countries are being exacerbated by international boundaries. China and Afghanistan regarded their international

borders with India and Pakistan as colonial boundaries imposed by colonial overlords. Since 1947, Afghanistan has repeatedly rejected the Durand Line and claimed Pashtun's self-determination. Pakistan denies this claim and maintains that the Durand Line is genuine. Afghanistan's Pashtuns claim a portion of what was once known as Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) as well as a portion of Baluchistan. The McMahon Line, which runs the length of the territory between India and China, is still a point of contention. China continues to claim 90,000 square kilometres of land in India's north-east, including the whole state of Arunachal Pradesh (83,743 square kms). Arunachal Pradesh is claimed by China to be a part of Tibet's southern region. The district of Tawang, located in Arunachal Pradesh's northwestern portion and bordering Bhutan and Tibet, is of particular interest to China.

In fact, South Asia, a region consisting of eight geographical states with similar geography, history, culture, politics, and linguistics, has an equal mix of history, culture, linguistic identity, and political aspirations. In fact, the competing nature of common history and culture, as well as the colonial past, creates more hostility to ideas than solidarity among them as a regional unit. The colonial past, internal political turmoil, socio-cultural fault lines, interstate engagements, and the participation of big powers all play a role in the majority of wars in South Asia, whether territorial or inter-ethnic.

Before examining the disputes on a case-to-case basis, you have to understand the conceptual and theoretical underpinning of territorial disputes.

11.2 TERRITORIAL DISPUTES AND THEIR MEANING

Land issues or land boundary disagreements between two or more independent nations are the basis of territorial disputes. They are the most complicated because they threaten state integrity. Parties in conflict frequently allude to ancient claims of ownership when discussing the origins of territorial conflicts in Asia. Factors such as colonialism and its legacy, Cold War geopolitics, and internal politics of one or more of the parties involved, rather than a history per se, are regarded important in understanding the origin of conflict and how they are inscribed by new meaning.

11.2.1 Variants of Territorial Disputes

All three categories of territorial disputes, as defined by Burnnet and Jaily in their conceptual definition of territorial disputes, can be found in this region – Land, Positional, and Functional Conflicts. Land conflicts are when both parties agree in principle on the Actual Line of Control but disagree on the position of the Boundary line. Positional disputes are when both parties agree in principle on the Actual Line of Control but disagree on the location of the boundary line. Competing understandings of border functioning are at the heart of functional disagreements. It occurs when two states dispute about how the border should be managed officially.

People and goods cross borders in such a border for both good and bad causes. The government actively attempts to manage its borders in order to

defend the state's security and economic interests. In the case of the India-Bangladesh international border, India attempted to fence its border in order to better manage its security, but Bangladesh objected. Disputes may arise over the construction and maintenance of boundary markers, fences, or walls; immigration policies and border control; and legal and illicit cross-border traffic of goods. This is a pretty common problem among all states in the region.

11.3 THEORETICAL EXPLANATION OF TERRITORIAL DISPUTES

In international politics, a number of theoretical proposals have evolved to explain the issue of territorial dispute. Positivist and post-positivist approaches attempted to interpret it in terms of their own worldview. One of the most popular theories following WWII was the realist argument, which states that shifting power equations usually lead to increased conflict over territorial issues. In today's world, growing assertive posture of China towards its neighbors for exceeding its territorial claims across the region can be seen as a best example of realist theory of changing power equations and its impact on growing territorial conflict in concerned regions. A disturbing inference is China's more confrontational posture towards territorial claims in South Asia.

Alternatively, Marxism views realism and liberalism's ideas of territorial sovereignty and territorial identity as self-serving ideologies that represent the interests of the states' economic and political elites. Marxists ignore and undervalue the role of the state. At the same time, it rejected key political aspects of the international system that cause a slew of territorial conflicts between nations, including power, nationalism, and war. Marxism believes that all disputes, whether territorial or based on beliefs and ideas, are in actuality sparked by the nation's economic elites to serve their own narrow interests. They argue that rather than territorial issues, war is caused by clashes of class interests.

Normative theories assume that disputed territories are a source of political conflict because of subjectively established norms, beliefs, and conceptions of justice in that region. The worth of territory, according to this perspective, is derived not only from political or economic objectives, but also as a source of sovereignty and identity for both the states and the people involved. According to this normative theory, cultural differences, national histories, and nationalistic sentiments all play a part in growing regional boundary disputes. The dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir is an example of a normative political narrative. Let us look at a case study of bilateral territorial conflicts within the South Asian region and beyond.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Define territorial disputes? What are the factors that are responsible for the emergence of territorial disputes within the region?

.....

- 2) Discuss different variants of territorial disputes. What is the theoretical underpinning of territorial disputes?

11.4 BILATERAL TERRITORIAL DISPUTES

As we all know, there are numerous territorial disputes prevailing in the South Asian region. Some of them are located within the areas, while others are located outside of the region. The McMahon Line, which separates India and China and is the world's longest frontier, is an example of territorial conflicts that extend beyond South Asia. Another example that remains inside the region is the Radcliffe and Durand lines. Bhutan and India have unresolved border boundaries with China, although Pakistan has a settled border. Similarly, within the area, India-Sri Lanka boundary conflicts are settled, but border disputes with Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan remain unresolved. Bilateral conflicts between adjacent countries can often escalate into violent conflict. The territorial issue resulted in numerous deaths in the region and became a source of friction between the region's nuclear powers. The legacy of British colonial authority in the region, as well as the nature of the British exit from the Indian subcontinent in a hasty manner that left a number of territorial disputes unresolved, should not be overlooked. The role of major powers like the US, China, and Russia in escalating territorial and bilateral tensions in the region cannot be dismissed.

11.5 TERRITORIAL DISPUTES BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

India and Pakistan have a number of border claims that range from locational, positional, and allocational conflicts to operational conflicts. Both countries have different perspectives on international boundaries. As a result, India and Pakistan's border is referred to as the Line of Control (LOC) rather than the international border. In the last 74 years, their bilateral relations have likewise centred around resolving their disputed boundary claims. The majority of their boundary conflicts are the result of colonial legacies. Sir Cyril Redcliff, a British barrister who had never visited India, had no knowledge of its realities, and arrived in India five weeks before the announcement of division, defined the India-Pakistan border in an absurd and illogical manner. Several villages and settlements were split in two. Within a month, a five-member panel chaired by Redcliff, with two Muslims and two Hindus as members, defined the border between India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, the three most populous countries in the South Asian region (then East Pakistan). Inadvertently, this anomalous boundary resulted in unresolved border conflicts between the two neighbours.

11.5.1 Jammu & Kashmir

The Jammu and Kashmir (hence referred to as J&K) has become a source of friction between India and Pakistan. The original state of J&K, which joined India in October 1947, covered 2,223,236 square kilometres of territory. Today, J&K has been divided into three parts, each of which is controlled by a different country. Only 1,06,566 sq km of the original state of J&K is physically occupied by India, whereas Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK) is 72,935 sq km and less than the 5,180 sq km of Shaks gam Valley was leased to China in 1963. China Occupied Kashmir (COK) consists of 37,555 sq km of Aksai Chin plus Shaks gam and territory nibbled over the years, all totalling up to 42,735 sq km. in February 2012. International media reportedly stated that Pakistan was considering leasing Gilgit-Baltistan (72,971 square kilometres) to China for 50 years. However, no official announcement of the agreement has yet been made. India has a Line of Control (LOC) with Pakistan and a Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. Pakistan currently controls one-third of the original J&K territory, while China controls the remaining one-fifth.

11.5.2 Sir Creek

Sir Creek is a 60-kilometre-long estuary in the Rann of Kutch. The Rann of Kutch is located between Gujarat in India and Sindh region in Pakistan. Sir Creek is significant because it falls between India and Pakistan's border, which has yet to be defined accurately by both countries. The boundary line, according to India, should go through the middle of the Creek Thalweg theory. Pakistan claims that the border should run along the river's eastern bank. The value of this swampy terrain can be determined by considering the marshland's future chances for locating petroleum resources and the abundance of fishes on the continental shelf.

11.5.3 Baglihar Dam

India proposed building the Wullar barrage, also known as the Tulbul Project, on the Jhelum River in Sopore, Kashmir Valley, which Pakistan regards as a violation of the 1960 Indus water treaty. Islamabad is concerned that it may interrupt Pakistan's water supply. Pakistan also worries that India may utilise the barrage to control the river's flow and exploit it as a geostrategic weapon. The construction of the Baglihar dam on the Chenab River by the Indian side has heightened tensions between India and Pakistan over resource utilisation. Water wars have been avoided in the past because of the Indus Waters Treaty, which was signed in 1960. India got exclusive rights to the waters of the Eastern Rivers until the point they flow into Pakistan, while Pakistan granted exclusive rights to the Western Rivers. However, because India controls the upstream flow, it has always had the upper hand over the Indus, leaving Pakistan vulnerable to India's whims. Pakistan has repeatedly questioned India's inherent advantage by bringing up the issue of regional water scarcity.

11.5.4 Siachen Glacier

The 76-kilometer-long Siachen Glacier is one of the world's longest glaciers. It is located in the eastern Karakoram Mountain range on the extreme north-west frontier of the Indian subcontinent, just south of the Chinese border.

The glacier gets its water from the Nubra River, which is a tributary of the Shyok and part of the Indus River system. The US Defense Mapping Agency began portraying the Pak frontier beyond the official position in disputes over the Siachen Glacier. From a cartographic standpoint, Pakistan now owns the whole Siachen-Saltoro region. Prior to this change by a US agency, maps from Pakistan, the United Nations, and other global atlases accurately portrayed the map. The problem was exacerbated by a documentary that broadcast on German television in 1979. In 1978, a German Siachen-Kondus Expedition entered Siachen through Bilafond La and established a base camp on the junction of the Siachen and TeramShehr rivers. In 1979, German television broadcasted the documentary “Expedition to the Longest Glacier.” Since then, this location has become a battleground between two armies vying for control of 3000 square kilometres of subpolar land above 5000 metres above sea level. Stephen Cohen, a well-known South Asian expert, discounted Siachen as a critical strategic military location.

11.6 INDIA/CHINA DISPUTES

The world’s longest unmarked border is shared by China and India. The Chinese military’s continual intrusion across the LAC, as well as the standoffs at Doklam in 2017 and Eastern Ladhak in 2020, are significant in the larger boundary disputes between India and China. The territorial dispute between the two countries over the Middle, Western, and Eastern sectors has yet to be settled. The middle sector, which covers 2000 square kilometres, is regarded to be the most close to the final resolution. Since 1958, the western sectors of 38000 sq km, popularly known as the Aksai chin area, have been under Chinese occupation, which India claims is part of Indian sovereignty. China controls it as part of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, but India asserts it as part of Jammu and Kashmir. The majority of Aksai Chin is uninhabited, but it is strategically vital for both countries because it was once part of the old silk route. China claims the majority of Arunachal Pradesh in the eastern part. Arunachal Pradesh is known in China as South Tibet, and China claims the northeastern Indian state as part of Tibet. The Eastern region, which covers 90000 square kilometres, is still a source of conflict between the two countries. Chinese and Indian troops have got involved in aggressive melees, face-offs, and skirmishes around the disputed Pangong Lake in Ladakh and the Tibet Autonomous Region, as well as near the boundary between Sikkim and the Tibet Autonomous Region. Additional confrontations were also reported along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

11.7 INDIA/NEPAL DISPUTES

The border between India and Nepal is mainly peaceful and permeable, with few restrictions on trade and people movement. Despite generally amicable relations, border issues have taken a catastrophic turn on occasion. The recent inauguration of a road link between Dharchula and Lipulekh by India has reignited the breach between India and Nepal, which was previously resolved in 1996 when both countries signed the Mahakali accord. However, Nepali politicians have used the India Kalapani-Lipulekh disputes as a significant instrument to create a gap between India and China

in order to benefit from the rivalry between the two great powers. Nepal is fully aware of the region's strategic importance to India. Nepal is a buffer zone for India, a land in the middle that should be neutral or on India's side.

11.7.1 Lipulekh

Lipulekh is a small piece of 35-square-kilometer strip of land that has caused friction between two friendly neighbours. In fact, it is a tri-junction between three countries: Nepal, India, and Tibet under the control of China. Both India and Nepal claim the stretch of 35 sq km of the land area of Kalapani as a part of their territory. India claims Kalapani as a part of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district while Nepal claims it as part of district of Dharchula.

Nepal also claims ownership of the area stretching from Lipu Gad, a tributary of the Kali River, to the Kali River's source east of Lipulekh pass. The Sugauli Treaty, negotiated in 1816 between British India and Nepal, is widely regarded as a key reference for all border demarcation lines between the two countries. The area of Lipulekh and Susta is currently a point of contention between two countries. Both countries continued to use the Sugauli Treaty as a guideline for borderland division, but their accounts differed according to their own records. The source and tributary of the Kali River have been the subject of different Nepalese versions. Nepal adds that during the 1962 India-China conflict, Nepal allowed Indian troops to occupy certain posts for defence purposes, from where the troops moved out later except the Kalapani area. Nepal claims the southern section of the pass and has refused to recognise it as a tri-junction. The tri-junction, according to the majority of Nepalese, is Limpiyadhura, not Lipulekh.

11.7.2 Susta

Another contested area between Nepal and India is Susta. It is currently managed by India as part of Bihar's West Champaran district. It covers a 20-square-kilometer area, and the problem arose as a result of the river bed shifting from Nepal's to India's side. According to the Sugauli Treaty, Nepal maintains this position. Susta was a part of Nepal because it was located on the western bank of the Narayani River, also known as the Gandak in India. However, because of changes in the riverbed through time, the Susta moved to the eastern side of the Narayani river, which India claimed as its property. Nepal alleges that India has encroached on 14,860 hectares of Nepali land.

11.8 BANGLADESH - INDIA DISPUTES

With a length of 4096 kilometres, the India-Bangladesh border is the world's fifth longest land border. West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram are five Indian states that share a border with Bangladesh. West Bengal's international border is 2217 kilometres long, while its borders with Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram are 443 kilometres, 856 kilometres, and 318 kilometres long, respectively. During the partition of India and Pakistan, Sir Radcliffe drew the border line between India and Bangladesh in haste, ignoring natural barriers and socio-cultural factors. India considers the artificial demarcation of international borders to be a security risk. The line divides communities and settlements as it passes

through villages. It frequently places people's dwellings in one country while their agricultural land is in another. There are some settlements that straddle the border, such as Hilli, where the front door opens in India and the back door opens in Bangladesh. In India, there are over a hundred villages that are positioned exactly on the border. The entire Indo-Bangladesh border is mostly tough terrain, with several boundaries, hilly and swampy plains, making it difficult for India to build fence across the border. It is anticipated that Bangladesh's overcrowding and the two nations' sharing of Ganga water during the dry season will exacerbate the border problem in the future.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What are the major irritants of territorial conflicts between India and Pakistan?

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- 2) Discuss India – China border problem in the context of recent face-off in the eastern sector.

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- 3) Which one is not a LAC between India and China?

- a) McMahon Line
- b) Johnson Line
- c) Redcliff Line

- 4) What is the issue of Lipulekh ?

11.9 INDIA / SRI LANKA DISPUTES

The “Pearl of the Indian Ocean” became known as the “Island of Tears” as a result of its destruction and conflict. However, the damage and conflict that has resulted in the ethnic cleansing of Tamil minorities is seen as the primary cause of discord between India and Sri Lanka. At the moment, there are no territorial issues between India and Sri Lanka. In 1974, a tiny island dispute known as Katchatheevu in the Palk Strait was also resolved in Sri Lanka's favour. When both countries signed an agreement on the Exclusive Economic Zone in 1976, the disputes were eventually settled. Katchatheevu is a 285-acre populated property with strategic fishing potential. Volcanic explosions developed the island in the 14th century. Both parties eventually settled the dispute that had erupted between British India and Ceylon since 1921.

However, the problem has taken on a political hue in India on several occasions when fishermen cross each other's territorial waters. Tamil Nadu

made a demand to reclaim territorial sovereignty. The Tamil Nadu Assembly passed a resolution in 1991 demanding Katchatheevu's restoration.

11.10 BANGLADESH / MYANMAR DISPUTES

Myanmar is a long-bordered country that borders Bangladesh. Rather than territorial difficulties, it has maritime boundary issues. Despite the fact that Myanmar and Bangladesh share a 270-kilometer land border, no further territorial issues have arisen as of yet, with the exception of Rohingya Muslim migration from Myanmar to Bangladesh. Of course, Bangladesh and Myanmar have had a lengthy conflict over the maritime boundary demarcation in the Bay of Bengal. The conflict concerns the demarcation of Bangladesh and Myanmar's territorial waters, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zones in order to gain access to vast natural resources including oil, gas, forestry, fisheries, arable land, and other minerals.

11.11 BHUTAN /CHINA DISPUTE

The Sino-Bhutanese boundary dispute has traditionally spanned 295 square miles of land; nevertheless, China has recently expanded its territorial claims beyond the disputed areas in northern and western Bhutan to include Bhutan's eastern districts. Apart from the Jakurlung and Pasamlung valleys in northern Bhutan and the territories of Doklam, Sinchulung, Dramana, and Shakhatoe in western Bhutan, the Chinese have begun to claim the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary in Bhutan's eastern district of Trashigang. This extended territorial claim by China was seen as part of a bigger Chinese strategy to undermine India's supremacy in South Asia. Bhutan requested funds for the Sakteng Wildlife Century project from a US-based environmental finance firm in June 2020, bringing this contentious claim to light. The Chinese representative objected to Bhutan's application, claiming that the sanctuary was located in disputed territory between China and Bhutan.

11.11.1 Doklam

Doklam is another key source of tension in India-Bhutan-China ties. In Western Bhutan, there is a trijunction area. China claims that the trijunction between India, China, and Bhutan lies at Mount Gipmochi (Gyemo Chen), considerably south of where India and Bhutan mark the trijunction near Batang la. China claims 89 square kilometres in a territory south of the trijunction claimed by India and Bhutan. Doklam is crucial to India's strategic interests. It pushes China even closer to the Indian border in a vulnerable region, in the direction of the 27-kilometer-long Siliguri Corridor, often known as the "chicken's neck," which connects India's northeastern states to the rest of the country. The Chinese army began occupying the area in June 2017 by constructing a road from Dokala in the Doklam area to the Bhutan Army camp at Zompelri. This sparked a 73-day standoff at the trijunction area between the Chinese and Indian forces.

11.12 PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN DISPUTES

The Durand Line was drawn in 1893, when India was still a British colony and Pakistan was not yet a country on the map. However, after the independence of India and Pakistan as two independent nations in 1947, disputes remain

unsettled. Afghanistan demanded a revision of the border as the British prepared to leave India. Its plea was turned down. Afghanistan was the sole member nation to vote against Pakistan's admission to the United Nations in 1947. Following that, Afghanistan declared that all prior Durand Line accords, including subsequent Anglo-Afghan treaties sustaining it, were null and void due to British coercion on Afghan authorities. Pakistan, on the other hand, claims that the Durand Line is a genuine border that it has lawfully inherited as the legitimate successor state of British India.

Sir Mortimer Durand, a secretary of the British Indian administration, established the boundary line in the historical interest of the empire to secure control of the crucial Khyber Pass, which opened the gateway to India. After annexing most of Central Asia, Russia's Czarist Empire was pushed dangerously close to the Pamirs, British India's borderland. The British empire's control in the Indian subcontinent was endangered by their expansionist policies and move to the Pamirs. Britishers used Afghanistan as a pawn in a great power game of 19th-century between the Russian and British empires. The entire reason for the creation of the border between British India and Afghanistan was against the region's ethnic sensibilities. From the start, Pashtuns were hostile to any additional Punjabi expansions towards the Durand line. The Durand line, on the other hand, divided the Pashtun tribal territory in two. The Pashtun tribal region was split in half and became part of British India, while the other half remained in Afghanistan. Pashtuns on both sides of the border have viewed the line with absolute scorn and anger, which has resulted in Afghanistan losing the province of Baluchistan, depriving the country of its traditional access to the Arabian Sea.

11.12.1 Demand for Pashtunistan

Near the Durand Line, Punjabis and Pashtuns were two prominent ethnic groups. Sunni Muslims make up the majority of Punjabis and Pashtuns. Punjabis are Pakistan's largest ethnic group. The Pashtuns are Afghanistan's largest ethnic group. The Durand line has been a flashpoint of conflict in the region for the last hundred years due to ethnic cleavages between two groups and their historical collision of identical interests. Pakistan's ruling elites are Punjabis, while Afghanistan's ruling clan is Pashtuns. Pashtuns are also numerous in northwestern Pakistan, where they once reigned over an area of 103,600 square kilometres (40,000 square miles). The Durand line divides Pashtun ethnic nationalism. Afghanistan controls one side of the Durand Line, while Pakistan oversees all Pashtuns on the other. On the Pakistan side of the border, Pashtuns made up more than half of the population, but they were now under Punjabi rule, which enraged them. As a result, there are repeated demands for a larger Pashtunistan, posing a danger to Pakistan's territorial unity and sovereignty. The area on both sides of the line became the focus of a movement for Pashtun independence and the construction of an independent state of Pashtunistan in the mid-twentieth century.

Check Your Progress 3

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.
- ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Why is Afghanistan refusing to accept the Durand Line as an international boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan?

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- 2) Discuss Katchatheevu Island issue between India and Sri Lanka?

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- 3) Examine Doklam Issue? Why is it strategically important for India?

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11.13 LET US SUM UP

In South Asia, territorial conflicts have played a significant role in determining the relationship between states. The South Asian region, which has become a hotbed of war, is a worrying concern for the region's future prospects.

The turbulent process of post-colonial nation-building and the creation of an unnatural and absurd nation-state system that led to the five full-scale interstate conflicts between nuclear-armed adversaries and Asia's major powers is attributed to the colonial demarcation of the international boundary. Despite these five full-scale conflicts, the fighting nations' geographical boundaries remain unsettled. It has proven to be a significant contributor to the region's long-term peace, stability, and prosperity. Integration of South Asian countries into a friendly community has the potential to bring peace and prosperity to the area. Factors such as colonial legacies, unresolved boundary disputes, and the undefined status of the region's ethnic and religious minorities, cultural fault lines, the creation of an unnatural and absurd nation-state system, and the role of external powers are all contributing to the region's territorial conflicts. Other concerns, other than territorial disputes, too have repercussions in their bilateral relationship. Internal conflicts, river disputes, water sharing, external marine zones, human migration, cross-border terrorism, and other concerns frequently transform bilateral conflicts into regional conflicts

1.14 References

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11.15 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE

Check Your Progress -1

1. Territorial disputes are all about land disagreements or land border disagreements between two or more sovereign nations. They are the most complex ones as they undermine the integrity of states.

Factors responsible for Territorial disputes in the region are as follows; (i)turbulent process of formation post-colonial nation building (ii) conflicting nature of shared history and culture(iii)colonial past (iv) creation of unnatural and absurd nation-state system (v) unresolved boundary question (vi) and undefined status of diversity of its ethnic and religious minorities.

2. There are mainly three variants of territorial disputes; Land related, Positional and Functional disputes. Land disputes are undermining the authority of claim of each other. Positional disputes are agreements by both the parties in principle on the Actual Line of Control but not agreed on the position of the Boundary line. Functional disputes are all about competing understanding of the border functioning. It arises when two states disagree about the official management of the border.

For theoretical underpinning of the subject, we have to understand the perspectives given by Realist, Marxist and Normative constructivist school of thought. See section 11.3 for further elaboration.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Major irritants of territorial conflicts between India and Pakistan are;
 - a. J&K
 - b. Sir Creek
 - c. Baglihar Dam
 - d. Siachen Glacier
 - e. Cross border terrorism
2. Recent face-offs between Chinese and Indian troops have at locations along the Sino-Indian border near the disputed Pangong Lake in Ladakh and the Tibet Autonomous Region, and near the border between Sikkim and the Tibet Autonomous Region. Additional

clashes also took place at locations in eastern Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

3. Redcliff Line
4. Lipulekh is a small piece of a strip of land of 35 sq km. Both India and Nepal claim the stretch of 35 sq km of the land area of Kalapani as a part of their territory. India claims Kalapani as a part of Uttarakhand's Pithoragaradistrict while Nepal claims it as a district of Dharchula. Nepal also claims that the entire area from Lipu Gad, the tributary of Kali River, up to the source of Kali River in the east of Lipulekh pass is Nepal's territory.

Check Your Progress 3

1. When the Britishers prepared to leave India, Afghanistan demanded a revision of the border. Its request was denied. Subsequently, Afghanistan announced that all previous Durand Line agreements, including the subsequent Anglo-Afghan treaties upholding it, were invalid because Afghan rulers were coerced by British pressure. Therefore, when Pakistan applied for the United Nations membership in 1947, Afghanistan was the only member nation to vote against its membership.
2. Katchatheevu is a 285-acre small island formed due to volcanic eruption in the 14th century. Since 1921 India and Sri Lanka were claiming their sovereignty over this island. However, it was also settled in Sri Lankan favour in 1974. In 1976, the disputes were finally settled when both the countries signed an agreement on the Exclusive Economic Zone.
3. See subsection 11.11.1 for answer.

UNIT 12: WATER DISPUTES AND WATER SHARING

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction: Understanding the Waterscape
- 12.2 Run of Rivers
- 12.3 South Asia: A Riverine Neighbourhood
- 12.4 South Asia's Major Rivers
- 12.5 Water and Security or Hydropolitics
- 12.6 Water Treaties
- 12.7 Indus Waters Treaty
- 12.8 Ganga Treaty
- 12.9 Conclusion
- 12.10 Let us Sum up
- 12.11 References
- 12.12 Answers to Check your Progress Exercises

12.0 OBJECTIVES

South Asia's river systems flow through six countries from Afghanistan in the west to Bangladesh in the east. These rivers as they criss-cross boundaries sustain the livelihood of more than 1 billion people, irrigate millions of hectares of agricultural land and have several shared benefits like inland navigation, hydropower and fisheries. In view of the growing water challenges in the region, there is a need to understand the political/strategic dynamic as well as several water engagements between India and its neighbours. The two important examples identified for study are Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) between India and Pakistan, and the Ganga Treaty between India and Bangladesh. After going through this Unit, you will be able:

- To appreciate the value of water as an indispensable resource.
- To understand water issues across international boundaries/borders.
- To understand the dynamics of water cooperation in South Asia both in terms of settling water disputes and framing water sharing and water benefits arrangements.
- To provide an overview of the water treaties in South Asia particularly the Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan and the Ganga Treaty between India and Bangladesh.

12.1 INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING THE WATER SCAPE

Water is life'. Different religions express this reality. In Hinduism, 'everything is water'; in the Koran 'God created all things from water';

and in the Bible water is mentioned 722 times. The earth is described as the 'Blue Planet'. While water covers 70.9 per cent of the earth's surface, only 3 per cent is fresh or potable and used for human consumption. Of this, 2 per cent is frozen and locked in glaciers, snow, ice and permafrost. Of the remaining 1 per cent, 30 per cent is ground water. The remaining freshwater found in rivers, lakes, ponds, and other water bodies, is non-frozen, salt-free, and accessible for human consumption.¹ This is the 'visible water' that society interacts with for drinking, agriculture, domestic and industrial needs. Precipitation and rainfall also add to the freshwater stock.

Water resources is fundamentally challenged by increasing population and consumption patterns. It is estimated that two out of every three people in the world will live in water-stressed conditions by the year 2030. In the 20th century, world population tripled and the consumption of water increased six times. By 2030, the demand for water will be 40 per cent more than it is currently and 50 per cent higher in the most rapidly developing countries that include India and China.² According to UN 2015 estimates, by 2030, world population is projected to reach 8.5 billion. The bulk of the population increase will be in countries already experiencing water shortages.

Since water resources is the lifeline for all life, it is often referred to as the 'commons'—resources that are meant for collective use and belonging to all rather than for limited ownership. Jay Walljasper explains:

Water commons means that water is no one's property; it rightfully belongs to all of humanity and to the earth itself. It is our duty to protect the quality and availability of water for everyone around the planet. This ethic should be the foundation of all decisions made about use of this life giving resource. Water is not a commodity to be sold or squandered or hoarded.³

There is emphasis on the 'commons' principle today. It explains water rightfully available for the ecosystems. Maude Barlow argues that, "Every human activity now needs to be measured by its impact on water and the water commons," and declares that "It is a flagrant violation of human rights when only the rich have access to clean water."⁴

The UN water website has recorded fundamental facts on water from various sources, including the World Bank, UNEP and the Oregon State University. Some of these facts are:⁵

- 85 per cent of the world population lives in the driest half of the planet
- 783 million people do not have access to clean water.
- 6–8 million people die annually from the consequences of disasters and water-related diseases.
- Agriculture accounts for 70 per cent of global freshwater withdrawals (up to 90 per cent in some fast-growing economies).
- An estimated 148 states have international basins within their territory.
- There are 276 trans-boundary river basins in the world (64 transboundary river basins in Africa, 60 in Asia, 68 in Europe, 46 in North America and 38 in South America).
- There are numerous examples where trans-boundary waters have proved to be a source of cooperation rather than conflict. Nearly 450

agreements on international waters were signed between 1820 and 2007. Over 90 international water agreements were drawn up to help manage shared water basins on the African continent.

These facts outline four broad characteristics of water. First, water is the largest shared resource in the world. Almost 90 per cent of water flows across political boundaries and therefore, requires considerable inter-state understanding. Second, water, as a trans-boundary resource, remains by nature unruly, and conforms to no unanimously accepted rules. Procedures do exist, based on principles and norms; but water-sharing arrangements among basin countries are reached ultimately through political equations. Third, states have shown a willingness to cooperate. Some of the world's most implacable enemies have negotiated water agreements. Fourth, water issues within countries (domestic/internal) determine water issues between countries (inter-state).

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer
ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the Unit

Check Your Progress 1.

1. Is water an infinite resource? Discuss

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2. Describe the global waterscape.

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12.2 RUN OF RIVERS

Rivers are the most visible form of freshwater. Rivers are a 'mini cosmos' spawning history, culture, spirituality, and technological interventions. Several millennia ago, the rise of ancient civilizations were marked by the flow of rivers and their use for irrigation and transportation. Even today, in the 21st century globalised world, there exists a symbiotic relationship with rivers. Rivers, at one level, are economically exploited and are value addition, for example, irrigation and power generation; and, at another, rivers are an inseparable part of the identities, cultures, and religious perceptions of different peoples.

Rivers are the largest renewable water resource. Rivers flow from their source, in the direction gravity allows, to the mouth where they disappear into the surroundings. Rivers have drawn humans to engineering interventions such as dams, diversions and barrages. These 'marvels' have undoubtedly resulted in great economic benefits. However, such interventions have changed flow patterns of rivers disturbing the downstream quality of water as well as sediment deposition, which subsequently affects fish and wildlife while also displacing people from their locale.

Only 37 per cent of world's longest rivers, defined as more than 1000 km, are free flowing.⁶ Most of these rivers are in a state of degeneration and degradation with declining water quality levels and pollution. Several reasons can be attributed to it, such as intensive water use for agriculture, unregulated industrial development and waste flow, and river habitat modification. The World Wildlife Fund Report describes a free flowing river as one that:

'Flows undisturbed from its source to its mouth, either at the coast, an inland sea or at the confluence with a larger river, without encountering any dams, weirs or barrages and without being hemmed in by dykes or levees. In today's world such rivers, particularly those that run over long distances, are increasingly rare. In large river systems distinct stretches of rivers can retain characteristics of a free-flowing river, despite the presence of water infrastructure upstream or downstream of this stretch.'⁷

Rivers are crucial to economic development and form an important part of national policies. Because rivers have broad based engagement, they represent basic values like equity, transparency, accountability, sustainability, and the participation of the people in water policy processes. Epistemologically, rivers are, therefore, inter-disciplinary and its relationship has to be understood from the context of history, culture and ecology.

In the first six decades of the 20th century, there was considerable focus on dam constructions. By the 1970s, the negative ecological and economic impacts of water projects prompted development planners to rethink on such concrete structures and focus on maintaining watershed principles. As a result, concepts like 'minimum flows' and 'in-stream flows,' came into the lexicon of water planners. New sets of knowledge today give us a holistic understanding of rivers. This is not only determined in terms of volumes but equally as an integrated systems that include flood plains, watershed and deltas. Of late, the e-flow or environment flow concept is essential for sustainably managing water resources and meeting long-term needs of people. Greater the understanding about the various dimensions of rivers better would benefits accrue. The WWF Report describes ecological flow as the quantity, timing, and quality of water flows that are required to sustain a freshwater and estuarine ecosystem as well as the livelihood and the well-being of humans depends on these ecosystems.⁸

Just as river waters is required for agriculture, industry, and domestic use, so also water is a requirement and a necessity for the wellbeing of the river. The relationship between river flows and river ecology is important. As rivers meander from the source to the mouth, the journey and the changes that occur are described in terms of a 'continuum'.⁹ Noted Indian water expert, Ramaswamy Iyer underlines the significance of distinguishing between in-stream flows for different purposes.

Flows are needed for maintaining the river regime, making it possible for the river to purify itself, sustaining aquatic life and vegetation, recharging groundwater, supporting livelihoods, facilitating navigation, preserving estuarine conditions, preventing the incursion of salinity, and enabling the river to play its role in the cultural and spiritual lives of the people.¹⁰

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the Unit

Check Your Progress 2

1. Rivers are life-giving but not lifeless. Can it be then said that rivers have rights equivalent to people? What has been the Indian judiciary role on this?
2. What does 'commons' mean?
3. Has economic development over-exploited the rivers and made it unsustainable? What are your views?

12.3 SOUTH ASIA: A RIVERINE NEIGHBOURHOOD

South Asia is the southern region of Asia which is defined both geographically and in ethno-cultural terms. It consists of the Hindu-Kush and Himalayas mountain ranges, the Indus Basin in the west, the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) river system in the east and the vast peninsular India in the south. Described as a crowded, hot, hungry, and a fast evaporating region, South Asia occupies about 5 per cent of the world's land mass and has about 4 per cent of world's annual renewable water resources that flows through several river basins.¹¹ Almost 95 per cent of water in South Asia is consumed by the agriculture sector as compared to the world's average of 70 per cent. Except for Nepal and Bhutan, the per capita water availability is lower than the world average. Given the uneven endowment and development of water resources in South Asia, the issues and challenges are large, diverse, and complex.

The Indian civilisation laid great emphasis on ensuring abundance of food and sharing the products among the living as a primary principle of righteous public functioning or the dharma. India's national song *VandeMatram* has the lines "sujalamsuphalammalayajasitalamsasyasamalam" which translated is "rich with thy hurrying streams, bright with orchard gleams" – the land that is richly watered, richly fruited and richly harvested. The perennial rivers and the vast fertile stretches make it the land of abundance. The Indo-Gangetic plain is the greatest expanse of rich, tillable soil, and thus one of the world's greatest agricultural region. The socio-cultural-economic development around rivers is shaped by the predictability and availability of resources.

South Asia comprises of eight countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives) with a population of 1.9 billion or 23 percent of the world population. Complex water challenges, fluctuating rainfall, receding glaciers and increasing per capita water categorises the region as vulnerable to water issues, with Pakistan and Afghanistan the most water-stressed states in the region. South Asia's rivers are vulnerable to climate change, degradation, and flooding, increasing demand of water with increasing population.

Several rivers in South Asia criss-cross national boundaries and, therefore, are transboundary. These transboundary rivers link its riparian

states in a complex network of environmental, economic and security interdependencies. Such interdependencies can either reinforce or reduce differences. Rivers also acquire political characteristics that result in rivalries and/or cooperation. In the South Asian context, transboundary rivers raise an important question: does a river represent a supra-identity which transcends national identities and help in ascertaining shared values and benefits across borders? In other words, whether water can drive greater cooperation between states or whether it requires intractable political problems to be resolved first before water cooperation can be achieved. India is the only country in South Asia that shares the rivers with all its neighbours, thus making it uniquely an upper and lower riparian country. India's water relations with Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh are an essential component of regional stability.

South Asian states have developed along river systems that are intricately connected from the source (the glaciers in the mountains) to the mouth (the deltas). This interdependence has been less understood when the focus has remained on borders and territorial disputes. By moving away from a territorial perspective to a view of South Asia as an exponential function in which population growth leads to greater demand for food, larger claims for areas of cropland, and greater volumes of water is an interesting way to look at the region. Significantly, planning any water resource utilisation policy will have to take into account the assessment of the impact of climate change in terms of seasonal flow and extreme events.

Water in South Asia is also a sensitive and emotive issue, as the region's economy and predominantly rural livelihood depends on water. Moreover, many of the Himalayan rivers are intimately tied up with the issue of territory, as the rivers enter areas where there is contestation over borders and territories. For example, the Indus flows through parts of Kashmir which Pakistan intentionally raises it as a disputed territory. Similarly, the Brahmaputra is linked with the Sino-Indian border contestation in the eastern Himalayas, where China claims the territory of Arunachal Pradesh, where the Brahmaputra enters India.

12.4 SOUTH ASIA'S MAJOR RIVERS

Three principal sub continental rivers (more than 1000 km in length) originate from the Hindu Kush Himalaya and the trans-Himalaya or the Tibetan plateau – the Indus, the Ganga and the Brahmaputra. The Indus river flows from its source in Tibet. After passing through Ladakh where it is joined by the Zaskar and Shyok rivers, it enters Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (POK) and then flows southwards into Pakistan. The Indus collects the Chenab, Jhelum, Sutlej, Ravi and Beas rivers from India before draining into the Arabian Sea near Karachi. Together it is called the Indus River System. The Ganga emerges at Gaumukh in the Himalayas at the terminus of the Gangotri where the Bhagirathi and the Alaknanda join. While Ganga originates in the Indian territory is an exclusive Indian river; of the nine major tributaries of the Ganga that flow into India from Nepal, the three principal tributaries Karnali, Gandaki and Kosi all have their sources in Tibet. The Ganga forms part of a larger river basin known as the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM). The Brahmaputra originates from the glaciers and alpine

lakes in the Tibetan plateau, where it is referred to as the Yarlung Zangbu. The river traverses a large territory linking China, India, Bhutan (through tributaries) and Bangladesh, where it is called Jamuna, eventually draining into the Bay of Bengal.

All the three major rivers with its tributaries carry huge amount of nutrient rich sediments which deposits as fertile soil along the rivers banks. This has allowed civilizations to develop and thrive along the river course for millennia. Today, these rivers flow through densely populated parts of South Asia, providing freshwater for irrigation, drinking and fishing. As these rivers empty into the seas (Arabian Sea on the west and the Bay of Bengal in the east) they form the world's largest river deltas, for example the Sunderban.

It is also important to recognize that these transboundary rivers cascade from the towering heights of the Himalayas, and, therefore, there is enormous hydro-potential, particularly in Nepal, Bhutan, Kashmir and Northeast India. There is a rising demand of energy in South Asia and there is equally a need for low-carbon energy keeping in mind commitments to reducing carbon emissions. Rivers in South Asia are amongst the most dammed as countries in the region continue to invest in sustainable hydropower. For Nepal and Bhutan hydropower is a backbone of their economy. India has the world's fifth largest hydropower capacity.

The various assessments of climate change on the glaciers suggest that there is going to be an increase in melt-flow resulting in regular flooding. Construction of facilities to store this excess water and release it during dry period presents challenges as well as opportunities. Glaciers roughly contribute to about 10 per cent of flow in the Brahmaputra and the Ganges, while it accounts for almost 45 per cent in the Indus.¹² Beyond the economics of water management, including the need for dams and water storage facilities for economic development, there is the political reality of fear and misperception among lower riparian countries, especially over such structures. Clearly, the hydrology of the region is not only tied up with economic development but also with security.

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the Unit

Check Your Progress 3.

1. Give a riverine overview of South Asia.

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12.5 WATER AND SECURITY OR HYDRO POLITICS

The fundamentals of security/insecurity—who is secure from whom or what, when, where and how—remain embedded in the security discourse.¹³ In understanding the broad-based nature of security today, expressed as 'broadening' and 'deepening' of security, it is important to consider the

impact of water resources on state and society. Water issues between states or 'inter-state' can lead to disputes and potentially hostile situation thereby affecting political-diplomatic relations. Likewise, water challenges can also impact relations between provinces within the states or 'intra-state'. The following points commonly emerge:

- There is no single causal factor to water-induced conflict.
- Water-induced conflict is not an entity in itself but part of complex pathways to conflict that involves political, strategic, economic and territorial factors.

Three factors contribute to water resources being a dispute or at times a threat: depletion and degradation, increased demand, and uneven distribution. Those concerned with water crises are divided into two schools. One, indicates that water, as a source of conflict is more likely to occur within countries than between them. This school focuses on water as a source of cooperation, and an impetus for scientists and political leaders to use modern science and advanced technology to create new solutions and suitable alternatives.¹⁴ This school also looks into the history, scope, and design of international water treaties.¹⁵ The other school, argues that water as a source of dispute or conflict will be increasingly inter-state in nature, and examines water-related conflicts. This school of thought, however, makes it very clear that 'water resources have rarely been the sole cause of conflict', and should be viewed as a 'function of the relationships among social, political, and economic factors, including economic development.'¹⁶ This school also evaluates the role of water as a tool and weapon (both political and military) of statecraft.

In South Asia with growing water challenges, it is now a common national security refrain that a stable supply of water is critical to the country's political, social and economic stability. The political framing of water issues is inextricably linked with a variety of broader contextual issues, particularly energy, food and wealth generation. Further, and as explained earlier, internal or domestic water challenges will greatly impact transboundary water relations.

Water as a security issue allows for a broad-based participation of actors. In other words, there is greater participation of the 'epistemic community' (a trans-national network of experts, academia, and civil society) in the policy-making process. However, both the traditional security community as well as the development community are wary to link water issues with security. The former argue that water issues are primarily welfare and development concerns, and that the state has always been oriented towards protecting water supply. The latter feels that positioning water issues into the security ambit will only reinforce the state-centric apparatus.

However, it cannot be denied that water has impacted state relations in South Asia during the colonial period with Nepal and then during the Partition in 1947 when the state of Pakistan was created and later in 1971 when Bangladesh became independent. The primary security concern was over water sharing and distribution which could create acrimonious relations. Resultantly, South Asia has seen several bilateral water treaties since the time of the signing of the Sarada Treaty with Nepal in 1920. Given

the increasing water stress amongst states in South Asia both in terms of quantity and quality, it is not unlikely that states will try to maximize their water resources and convert them into political and diplomatic assets. Downstream countries, like Pakistan and Bangladesh, which are highly dependent on river waters for their well-being will be motivated to take aggressive positions vis-a-vis India.

With water a bilateral and regional agenda, South Asia is a 'hydro-political security complex' in which states are simultaneously part 'owners' and part 'users' of rivers. This framework has opened up various levels of analysis on how riparian states behave (hydro-behaviour), upstream-downstream contestation (hydro-competition), prior use issues, and clashes of priorities. Given that states are interested in maintaining relative capabilities, water has now acquired a political sharpness and the attributes of power.

Water relations can never be permanently settled, the reason being that river flows are not constant. The flows in turn are determined by seasonal variations and usage, particularly those that are non-consumptive in nature. Also, interventions and diversions on rivers impact flow. Political relations can easily be impacted by changes in the quantitative and qualitative nature of the river. Varied interpretations of the use of river water have resulted in claims and counter-claims. There are, however, accepted legal norms of 'equitable utilization', 'no-harm rule' and 'restricted sovereignty' that riparian states work through, and frame negotiations and treaties to overcome such differing positions. These have been reflected in many of the water treaties in South Asia. Given India's riparian linkage, whether upstream or downstream, and given its diplomatic investment in a number of treaties with its riparian neighbours, hydro-diplomacy will be a vital component of its neighbourhood policy.

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the Unit

Check Your Progress 4.

1. **Water has become a national security issue in South Asia. Do you agree?**

12.6 WATER TREATIES

Before understanding the water treaties between South Asian countries, it is essential to know that there are two types of water in question. This is described as 'big water' and 'small water'. Drinking water and water for domestic services, which constitute about 10 per cent of the water needed, is categorised as 'small water'. The remaining 90 per cent is 'big water', which concerns the production of food and energy, and is crucial to economic development. This includes water for irrigation and hydroelectricity production. This principally forms the nuts and bolts of the water treaties.

In South Asia, water treaties reflect a measurement of cooperation and offer states a structure to coordinate actions. The basis for river water treaty is to find an equitable approach for meeting vital human needs. Water treaties in South Asia are also a barometer to gauge state behaviour and the political climate. This raises a few interesting questions. How and to what extent

does a changing political climate affect existing treaties? Does the signing of river water treaties lead to more cooperative ventures in other areas between the riparian concerned, thereby enhancing the overall cooperative environment in the region? Is the negotiation process preceding the signing of a treaty to be seen as a matter of conflict resolution, or is it only a provision that temporarily conceals the claims and counter-claims, and the real and perceived fears of the riparian (particularly lower riparian)? Do 'the real and perceived fears' lead to non-compliance of the treaty with an overriding 'militarized' approach in which the 'possession' of water is determined unilaterally? And finally, what are the linkages and trade-offs associated with transboundary water sharing? Water treaties are time-specific and are a translation of a political will at a particular time, and cannot be viewed in terms of finality. As the lives and livelihood of people exponentially grow around the river basin, so does the demand for and consumption of water. The efficacy of treaties between the riparian will always be tested, if not completely severed or abrogated. In South Asia the following broad characteristics define water treaties:

- River water treaties are both 'rights-based' and 'needs-based'. The former is dominant during the course of negotiations. In the post-treaty period, issues are more 'needs-based'. That is why water treaties in South Asia cannot be seen as final solutions, as states continuously have to cope with changing ground realities. Examples of this are the Indus Waters Treaty (1960) between India and Pakistan and the Ganges Treaty (1996) between India and Bangladesh.
- Both the upper and the lower riparian have stakes in the continuation of a treaty. In South Asia, the upper riparian, is in most cases, a strong military power (India), which leaves the lower riparian to avoid militaristic confrontations and emphasize the mutual benefits of a treaty. Lower riparian employ non-water linkages to pressure the upper riparian. In the domestic settings of Pakistan and Bangladesh, for instance, water is effectively staged as an issue of lower riparian 'victimhood' versus the upper-riparian 'aggressor' (i.e. India).
- A third party may play a critical role in the negotiation of water agreements, firstly as a mediator to help initiate a cooperative framework on the shared water basin, and later on as a provider of financial assistance. The involvement of a third party is an advantage for lower riparian, which makes it easier to enter into a treaty arrangement, as it offers space for neutral intervention and/or adjudication of disputes. As an example, the Indus Waters Treaty came into effect through the mediation of the World Bank, which also plays a key role in dispute adjudication.
- Dispute resolution mechanisms play a critical role in existing water treaties and are an important element of future water cooperation. In other words, when the rate of change within a river basin exceeds the institutional capacity to absorb the change, likelihood of disputes is high. The Indus Waters Treaty, for example has the Permanent Indus Commission, which has met 116 times since 1960 to look into concerns and grievances over the implementation of the treaty. In the case of India and Bangladesh, the Joint Rivers Commission created in

1972 discusses the framework for the sharing of rivers between India and Bangladesh. It was established “with a view to maintain liaison in order to ensure the most effective joint effort in maximizing the benefits from common river systems.”¹⁷ The JRC is headed by Water Resources Ministers of both the countries. Its most notable success is the Ganga Treaty in 1996. However, such mechanisms will need strengthening with new hydrological knowledge. With the growing importance of ‘river watershed management’ approaches and with easy availability of new monitoring technology, an entirely new set of enforcement mechanisms can be structured and infused into the treaty with lasting value.

Questions:

1. *What do understand by a Third Party role?*
2. *Why have we had more water cooperation than water conflict?*

12.7 INDUS WATERS TREATY

Water is a sensitive issue in India-Pakistan bilateral relations.¹⁸ After the Partition in 1947, the Indus Basin was divided and after several years of negotiations the Indus Waters Treaty was signed between India and Pakistan in 1960. The World Bank was the Third Party and helped in the negotiation process. The success of the World Bank is attributed to (a) the US support, and (b) ability of the World Bank to raise funds for water development project of the Indus Basin.¹⁹

The treaty provided the framework for sharing of the water resource in the Indus river system. It divided the six rivers of the Indus Basin. The treaty provisions gave exclusive rights to India over the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) with a combined average annual discharge of 33.8 Million Acre Feet (MAF). Pakistan has exclusive rights over the three western rivers (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab) with annual discharge of 135.6 MAF.

The treaty has distinct procedures to settle issues which may arise through the Permanent Indus Commission: “questions” are handled by the Commission; “differences” are to be resolved by a Neutral Expert; and “disputes” are to be referred to a seven-member arbitral tribunal called the “Court of Arbitration.” There is no exit clause in the Treaty. However, Article XII provides for modification of treaty provisions through a “duly ratified treaty”, which will replace the present one with the condition that it cannot be abrogated unilaterally. The most important provision in the Treaty is the Article VII which emphasises “Future Co-operation”. It recognizes the “common interest” of the two countries, “in the optimum development of the Rivers”, and to that end they would “co-operate, by mutual agreement, to the fullest possible extent”.

Summary of the Indus Waters Treaty²⁰

- The Indus system of rivers comprises of main stem of Indus river along with its five left bank tributaries, namely, the Ravi, the Beas, the Sutlej, the Jhelum and the Chenab and a right bank tributary, namely, the Kabul which does not flow through India.

- The Ravi, the Beas and the Sutlej are together called as Eastern Rivers while the Chenab, the Jhelum and the Indus main are called as Western Rivers.
- The Treaty provides India an absolute control of all the waters of Eastern Rivers while Pakistan shall receive for unrestricted use all those waters of the Western Rivers which India is under obligation to let flow beyond the permitted uses.
- India is permitted to use the waters of Western rivers for: (a) domestic use, (b) non consumptive use, (c) agricultural use and (d) generation of hydro-electric power.
- India is also permitted to construct storage of water on Western Rivers upto 3.6 million acre feet (MAF) for various purposes as specified in the Treaty.
- Both India and Pakistan undertook to establish a permanent post of Commissioner for Indus Waters. The two Commissioners constitute the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC). Unless either Government should decide to take up any particular issue directly with the other Government, each Commissioner will be the representative of his Government for all matters arising out of this Treaty.
- The Commission is required to meet regularly at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan and also when requested by either Commissioner. The Commission is also required to undertake tours of inspection of the Rivers and Works for ascertaining the facts connected with various developments and works on the Rivers.
- To enable Pakistan to satisfy itself that India's planned projects are within the Treaty provisions, India is required to communicate to Pakistan, in writing, their information specified in the Treaty. Pakistan can raise objections within three months of the receipt which are then resolved under Article IX.
- Article XII provides for the provisions of the Treaty to continue in force until terminated by a duly ratified treaty between the two Governments.

How the Treaty has Functioned

The Treaty in the last six decades has survived wars (1965 and 1971) and the Kargil conflict in 1999. There were no recorded strategic decisions by either of the two countries to attack the other's hydraulic installations or make them unusable. Every now and then, there is anger over Pakistan's cross-border terrorism. As a response to it there is a clamour in India for abrogating the Treaty as a tool of punishment. There have been several occasions – the Indian Parliament attack in 2001, the Mumbai terror attack in 2008, the recent terrorist attacks in Uri in 2016 and the 2019 Pulwama attack – which could have easily prompted India, within the interpretation of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties,²¹ to withdraw from the IWT. However, on each occasion, based on its cost-benefit assessments, India chose not to abrogate the Treaty.

What is disputable on the IWT today has nothing to do with water sharing, which is settled under the Treaty, but whether the Indian water projects on

the western rivers, in particular Jhelum and Chenab, as Pakistan claims, conform to the technical stipulations. Storages on rivers indeed create anxiety for lower riparian states. However, India, as an upper riparian, has taken water supply concerns of Pakistan into considerations and continues to engage with Pakistan through the Permanent Indus Commission. It must be noted that there is not a single storage dam that India has built on the western rivers even though the IWT allows storage entitlement of up to 3.6 MAF (million acre feet). The current NDA government since 2016 is correcting this.

Pakistan's objections to the projects on the western rivers have been tactical and less technical. Its objective has been principally to stall any water development projects in Kashmir. A prosperous and developed Kashmir is anathema to Pakistan leadership. Not surprisingly, Pakistan uses the water issues to drum up hysteria over Indian regional hegemony and its propaganda machinery works overtime. Pakistan has cleverly used its lower riparian position to garner international sympathy and cover-up its domestic incapability. The country receives 67 per cent of international waters, making it a boxed-in-lower-riparian not only with India but also with Afghanistan *vis-a-vis* the Kabul river. The leadership articulates its vulnerability and victimhood by raising water as a 'lifeline' issue, suggesting clearly that the sharing of the waters with India still remains unfinished business. A section of Pakistan's political-military leadership, given its feudal and industrial background, believes that the water issues not only help divert attention from Pakistan's inefficient water management policies and inter-provincial water dispute between Punjab and Sindh but would also provide a 'back door' for international involvement, once again, in the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

India's options

There have been debates in India about: (a) the need to replace the IWT with another improved treaty, (b) to abrogate it and (c) to utilise the provisions of the treaty. Those who advocate revision argue that the Treaty is outdated in the sense that it does not take into account new realities and grounds for cooperation (proper survey of the basins for better exploitation of water resources, reconsideration of the interests of Kashmiris whose interests were overlooked, and new technologies being used for dam making, de-siltation and ecological issues etc.), and hence begs for revision. In March 2003, the J&K state Assembly had passed a resolution urging Indian government to review IWT and revise it to accommodate the interests of the people of the state.

The advocates of abrogation argue that the Treaty has unjustly signed away more waters to Pakistan than it rightfully deserved, and has not ensured friendly behaviour from Pakistan. Moreover, it has taken undue advantage of the relevant clauses of the Treaty to stall and delay hydro-power and navigational projects in Jammu and Kashmir which has hurt the interests of the people. Therefore, India should abrogate the treaty unilaterally in response to irresponsible and hostile behaviour by Pakistan. The third perspective focuses on optimising the Treaty's provisions.

In view of the third perspective, adequate attention must, therefore, be paid to harness maximum possible water from these rivers through multipurpose

projects. Under the current NDA-government projects like the Ujh (storage of 0.82 MAF) and Shahpurkandi Dam (0.012 MAF) and 2nd Ravi Vyas Link Project which can harness water freely flowing across border to Pakistan, but which were hanging fire, have become a national priority. On the western rivers, the “permissible storage capacity” as per the Treaty provisions has not been paid serious attention in India. One of the projects identified for storage purposes is the Bursar Multipurpose Project on Marusudar river (main Tributary of Chenab) in Kishtwar district of Kashmir. It will store about 1 MAF, produce 800 MW of electricity and irrigate about 100,000 hectares. The Detailed Project Report (DPR) is under preparation. The second multipurpose project being planned is Gyspaon Bhaga River (Chenab Main)²² in Lahul & Spiti District of Himachal Pradesh. It is supposed to store water (0.74 MAF), produce 300 MW of electricity and irrigate 50,000 hectares of land. The DPR was completed in 2017.

These two projects need to be pursued with due sensitisation of the people about the value of such efforts, with well-planned rehabilitation and compensation measures. The state governments must be engaged effectively in this regard. For that matter, all power projects (33 under construction) and 8 under planning and execution (for example Sawlakote and Ratle) should be given top priority. Out of the total capacity of 11406 MW which is to be harnessed from the three western rivers, only 3034 MW has been tapped so far. Another 2500 MW generation capacity is being added with the upcoming projects that also include Pakaldal (1000 MW) and Kiru (624 MW) Projects. INR 34 billion has been sanctioned under Prime Minister’s Development Package since 2015 for strengthening of transmission and distribution systems in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Tulbul Navigation Project, which remains stalled, must also be completed despite Pakistan’s objections. Pakistan, as explained earlier, termed this navigation project as a violation of the IWT and refuses to understand the logic of enhancing connectivity through river which would have a rewarding effect on tourism and economy of the state.

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer
ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the Unit

Check Your Progress 5.

1. Write a summary of the Indus Waters Treaty in your own words.
2. What according to your understanding is the best option that India should take on the Indus Waters Treaty: modify, abrogate or optimise the treaty?

12.8 GANGA TREATY

India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers including the Ganga. These are described as common rivers. All these rivers are part of the GBM Basin. India is the upper riparian and Bangladesh is the lower riparian. The Ganga Treaty in 1996 resolved longstanding water sharing issues and has become a guiding format for the two countries to cooperate on other common rivers that they share.

Before the Ganga Treaty was signed, water issues were contested between India and Bangladesh. There were three major water issues. For India, the diversion of surface water from the Ganga was essential for flushing of the Calcutta (Kolkata) port and providing drinking water to Calcutta. Bangladesh claimed for a legitimate share of water. The dispute revolved around how much water is considered as 'legitimate' especially in the lean season when water becomes scarce. Another area of contention was the Farakka Barrage built in 1975 from where the water would be diverted for India's need.

With the creation Bangladesh in 1971, water immediately emerged as a political and emotive issue. In order to resolve differences and misperception, the two countries established a Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) in 1972. Both the countries signed a short-term agreement (49 days) in April 21, 1975 that allowed the commissioning of the Farraka Barrage on 'experimental basis' and defined the quantum of water to be shared during the lean season. With changing political conditions and military regimes in Bangladesh, no long-term agreement could be concluded between the two countries.

The political and diplomatic relations between the two countries continued to be acrimonious. The democratically-elected government in India was wary and uncomfortable with the military regimes in Dacca (Dhaka). On the other hand, Bangladesh inter nationalised Farakka Barrage and related water issues at various forums including the UN, the NAM summit in Colombo and Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference at Istanbul in 1976 to exert pressure on India. The international advice was broadly to resolve the issue bilaterally.

Subsequently, two interim short-term agreements were signed in 1977 (with a guarantee clause of 80 per cent share for Bangladesh). Later, a memorandum of understanding in 1982 was agreed (without any guarantee clause). Then in 1985 an agreement was concluded, which had a 'burden sharing clause if the water level falls below 75 percent of the standard flow.' A decade and a year later, the two countries agreed for a long-term Treaty on Ganga in 1996.

The Ganga Treaty acknowledged the shifting nature of the river and the decrease in the flow. The treaty clearly stated that 90 percent of Bangladesh's share will be released as per availability of water downstream of Farakka Barrage. The dispute redressal mechanism was to be bilateral and did not consider international arbitration as was the case in the Indus Waters Treaty. The Treaty will remain in force for a 30 years period and will be renewable by mutual consent. A Joint Committee was set up to monitor and implement the Treaty.

Signing of a water treaty does not necessarily mean that disputes will not arise. Differences and grievances over water sharing and distribution will remain a part of inter-state relations. With the Ganga Treaty framework, discussions are now continuing for sharing of waters of Teesta and Feni rivers besides six other common rivers: Manu, Muhri, Khowai, Gumti, Jaldhaka and Torsa. There exists in the Treaty, a system of transmission of flood forecasting data on major rivers like Ganga, Teesta, Brahmaputra and Barak during the monsoon season from India to Bangladesh. "The transmission of

flood forecasting information during the monsoon has enabled the civil and military authorities in Bangladesh to shift the population affected by floods to safer places.”²³

Summary of the Ganga Treaty of Treaty on Sharing of the Ganga/ Ganges Waters at Farakka²⁴

- A common desire mutually agreed upon for optimum utilization of the water resources and mutual benefits in the fields of flood management, irrigation, generation of hydropower
- An arrangement of sharing of waters at Farakka in a spirit of mutual accommodation and the need for a solution to the long-term problem of augmenting the flows of the Ganga.
- To find a fair and just solution without affecting the rights and entitlements of either country
- Article I refers to the quantum of waters agreed to be released by India to Bangladesh will at Farakka.
- A water sharing formula is agreed on ten day periods from the 1st January to the 31st May every year. This is quantified in Annexure I and II of the Treaty.
- In the event flow at Farakka falls below 50,000 cusecs in any 10-day period, the two Governments will enter into immediate consultations to make adjustments on an emergency basis
- A Joint Committee nominated by the two Governments in equal numbers to observe and record at Farakka the daily flows below Farakka Barrage, in the Feeder Canal, and at the Navigation Lock, as well as at the Hardinge Bridge.
- The two countries recognise the need to cooperate with each other in finding a solution to the long-term problem of augmenting the flows of the Ganga/Ganges during the dry season.
- The treaty to be guided by the principles of equity, fairness and no harm to either party.

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the Unit

Check Your Progress 6.

1. Write a summary of the Ganga Treaty in your own words?
2. Is the Indus Waters Treaty politically difficult to manage than the Ganga Treaty?

12.9 LET US SUM UP

Regions are now increasingly viewed as hydrological units, and no region with shared water is exempt from water-related controversies and disputes. A stable supply of water is critical for regional stability, and any economic and geopolitical forecasting has to factor the water resource. Various reports indicate that the lack of water rather than lack of arable land will constrain food production. The water–food link is crucial for sustained development and economic growth. This inextricable linkage in politically difficult

regions makes water a source of economic and social instability. Moreover, the underlying fact that sovereignty over the resource is not determined by formal legal principles exacerbates the complexity.

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UNIT 13: CIVIL SOCIETY IN SOUTH ASIA

Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Different Types of Civil Society Organisations
- 13.3 Defining Civil Societies
- 13.4 Origin of the Concept of Civil Society
- 13.5 Civil Society and the State
 - 13.5.1 Marxist Perspective
 - 13.5.2 Liberal Perspective
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13.0 OBJECTIVES

Civil societies have become an integral part of the political process in a democracy. They seek to promote, discuss, debate and mobilise public opinion on major public issues. In this process, they educate people and widen their vision, enhance their democratic participation and articulate various issues. These groups try to bring changes in public policy.

After going through this unit, the learner will be in a position to:

- Define and classify different types of civil societies;
- Analyse how do civil societies help connect with people to their communities;
- Identify factors on rise of civil societies in South Asia for the last 20 years;
- Discuss the relationship between the state and civil society in democratic societies;
- Explain the importance of civil societies and social movements to promote democracy;
- Describe the methods, strategies and techniques used by civil societies;
- Provide a critical evaluation of civil societies as a threat to a representative democracy.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

“Business, labor and civil society organisations have skills and resources that are vital in helping to build a more robust global community”.

-Kofi Annan, seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations Organisation

The term civil society has been explained in a variety of ways. Originally it meant a ‘Political Community’, a society governed by law under the authority of the state. More commonly it is distinguished from the state and the term is used to describe institutions that are private. In that they are independent from government interference and organised by individuals in pursuit of shared interests, emotions, values or purposes etc. Civil society is an arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests.”

Civil societies play an important part in raising social issues in the country. But in lack of true spirit, most of the social movements get failed. Diagram 1 shows that there is a direct relation between knowing about a social problem and acting towards resolving it. Holding on to the movement speaks a lot about the true spirit of the organisation.

Source: Author

Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the social reformer and India's first Justice Minister, used the slogan "Educate, Organise and Agitate" in his 1942 speech to All-India Depressed Classes Conference. He spoke of the need to upend caste oppression in India. In his words, "the mob without proper education gets organised or involves in agitation then it will lead to utter chaos. It may lead to

violent protests. The direction they follow may end up in confusion. Our conscience knows that agitation by uneducated and unorganised people generally cannot be effective. So here proper education and well-structured organisation is prerequisite for agitation success."



13.2 DIFFERENT TYPES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Civil society in real sense refers to a realm of autonomous, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Professional Associations (business groups, lawyers associations) etc. Causes-based interest or pressure groups are, however, a key part of civil society. It includes Youth Wings, Elderly Social Circles, Differently Abled Bodies Associations, Coalition Advocacy and Self-Help Groups, Sports and Leisure Clubs, Veteran's or Indigenous people's Organisations, Religious, Faith-Based or Minority Groups, Labour or Trade Unions, Women's Organisations, Social Movements, Charitable Trusts, Families and so on.

These all equally play a pivotal role as civil societies. The inclusion of civil society voices is essential to give expression to the marginalised and those who often are not heard. They facilitate better awareness and a more informed citizenry, who make better voting choices, participate in politics, and hold the government more accountable as a result. That is why civil society has emerged as an important phenomenon to the studying of issues of governance in political science. It is refereed as the third sector of the society. The complex variety inherent in the nature and concept has made civil society an integral part in the literature of comparative politics.

13.3 DEFINING CIVIL SOCIETIES

The definition of civil society varies from state to state and from society to society. In contemporary times, the civil society is being distinguished from the state because of the use of institutions or in terms to describe the institutions that are private. In a real sense, they are not part of the government but as an important group, associations, or institutions they will always have something to contribute to society. Thus, some of the important elements of civil society are freedom from profit making and administrative

regulations, constructive actions at grassroots level, ideas to bring a social change, and chances for professionals to join movements for noble causes.

Consider the following definitions of civil societies:

“Civil society is a community of citizens linked by common interests and collective identity. It manifests the will and interests of the citizens. It is the third sector of society after government and business. It **limits the power of the state** and ushers in true and vibrant democracy by enhancing participation.” - **Anthony Giddens**

“Civil Society is the domain of social association which will **check excesses of the state.**” –**John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville**

“Subordinated civil society is a mediating domain where particular interests of individual and universal interest of state can be reconciled for producing an ethical basis for modern society.” – **Hegel**

“Arena of polity where a self-organisation of groups, movements, and individuals, **relatively autonomous from the state**, attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests”

– **Stepan Linz**

“An intermediate associational realm between state and family and populated by organisations which are **separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily** by members of society to protect or advance their interest or values”. –**Gordon White**

“Civil Societies furthers dominant ideologies” –**Antonio Gramsci**

“Civil society describes diverse non-governmental institutions strong enough to counterbalance the state, and, whilst not preventing the state from fulfilling its role as a keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent the state from dominating and atomizing the rest of society.” –**Ernest Gellner**

“Civil society refers to a wide array of organisations: community groups, non-governmental organisations, labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, and foundations.” –**World Bank**

“Civil society includes all such voluntary organisations and social interactions which are not controlled by the state.” –**Neerja Gopal Jayal**

In contemporary times, civil society is being distinguished from the state because of the use of institutions or in other words to describe the institutions that are private in nature. Civil Societies work in parallel to the government. Some elements of civil society often characterised as ‘social movements’ seek radical transformations of the prevailing order. However, civil society also includes reformist elements that seek only modest revisions of existing governance arrangements and conformist elements that seek to reinforce established rules.

More recently, civil societies have emerged in the form of social activism on issues like protection of the rights of farmers, transgender community, women and migrant rights, ecology, health and insurance etc. For instance, groups like Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) and Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) have propagated public awareness on issues of right to

information to fight corruption and rights of child against exploitation respectively while pressurising the government for a better policy outcome.

Notable Indian political theorists and historians Partha Chatterjee and Sudipta Kaviraj desalinate Indian civil society from western civil society. According to them, the application of concepts of western civil society in India is wrong as the state in India is not as extensive as in the west. Norman D. Palmer in his book 'The Indian Political System' writes that despite mass illiteracy and consequent want of social communication, interest groups are very much in existence in India, although it must be admitted that they are not large in number, and are different from those in the Western countries.

13.4 ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The origin of the word civil society is ancient Greek (Greece) political ideas and found mention in the works of Cicero and other Roman thinkers. Cicero used the Roman term 'Socetas Civilis' means good society to ensure 'civilization' in politics and the 'good life' of the people." Traces of the idea of some association of the civil kind can be seen much before during the period of Enlightenment. The formal conceptualisation of the term is attributed to the theoretical developments emerging in the Scottish and Continental Enlightenment of the 18th century. For instance, An Essay on the History of Civil Society is a book by philosopher Adam Ferguson, first published in 1767. Generally, civil society is referred to as a political association that regulates social conflict by enforcing rules that prevent citizens from harming each other.

In classical political philosophy, many philosophers equated civil society with the state in their philosophy. For instance, the great philosopher Socrates taught that conflicts within society should be resolved through public reasoning using 'dialectical', a form of rational dialogue to uncover truth through question and answering methodology. He believed that through this the qualities of leadership develop in the people. On the other hand, an Athenian philosopher Plato considered dialectic to be merely a method of dialogue. Plato's dialectic aimed not just to communicate, but to seek truth. For instance, our perceptions have developed in such a way that perceive the usefulness of the objects seeing how they function. Our perceptions are limited like we cannot see beyond the color spectrum or we cannot see radio waves, ultra-violet rays, etc.

There could be more perceptions beyond the usefulness or aesthetics of an object also known as the meaning or truth behind the perceived object. Also, the dialect is useful in separating knowledge and or facts from opinion. Knowledge becomes evidence when placed in the context of an argument. The dialectic or dialogue is an argument or debate in which one has a point and subsequent counterpoint and in that way, they come to know the truth of the matter. This can be seen in the court of law or two or more party political systems in which dialectics are utilised through a point and counterpoint with reason and logic to get the truth out of the matter. Thus, with dialectic being truth-oriented, Plato established it as a new logical method of research, which was further refined and elaborated by Hegel and Karl Marx.

Hegel did not overlook the importance of individual's self-interest and at the same time advocated the protection of individual rights and property through appropriate mechanisms of state institutions. In Hegelian theory, a civil society comprised a vast gamut of social, civic and economic institutions such as religious groups, professionals, bureaucracy, courts, welfare agencies, and educational establishments. He further explained that the civil society operated at three levels: family (by birth), civil society (a combination of individualism and selfishness) and the state (composed of citizens oriented towards common interests of the whole political community).

13.5 CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE

To address the question of the relationship between the state and the civil society, there were differences of opinion. At one end, there were theories compelling the state to limit its role to as much necessary towards making civil society efficient for its self-regulation. That is, the more effective the civil society, the less was the need of the state. Contrarily, another viewpoint treated civil society as subordinate to the state which was in the interest of the civil society itself. It explained the need of a state as necessary for sustenance of a civil society.

13.5.1 Marxian Perspective

Classical Marxism understood civil society as entirely a different entity. While accepting the Hegelian idea of civil society as an association of private individuals pursuing private interests, Marx equated this association with bourgeois society based on class interest. He forwarded the idea of civil society as a society of self-seeking economic actors. Unlike Hegel and Paine or Tocqueville, Marx completely ignored the democratic principles of civil society associations. The later Marxists like Gramsci revised the reductionist approach of Marx.

13.5.2 Liberal Perspective

Theorists from the liberal school like J.S. Mill and Tocqueville reacted against state intervention which was seen as paralyzing the independent functioning of civil society affairs. They warned against the abuse of state power as usurping the freedom of citizens and advocated the principles of democracy and participation through civil society. Tocqueville, for instance, extensively distinguished between the state society and civil society.

According to Tocqueville, state was a set of formal governmental bodies such as Parliament, courts, police, bureaucracy, whereas civil society implied at non-state civilised associations of individuals such as parties, public opinion, churches, schools, commercial organisations, organisations for leisure and recreation etc. that simultaneously check the excessive centralisation of power by the state. Unlike Marx, Tocqueville excluded the economy from the civil society while exploring the nature of American civil society in the mid-19th century.

13.5.3 Radical Perspective

Radical school of thought in 1970s-1980s deemed the role of civil society as central to establishing a democratic state. The civil society, in the late 20th

century Europe, claimed a radical role towards bringing about a political transformation by replacing the authoritarian state by a democratic order. It was characterised more as an opposition force challenging the communist regime of the Soviet bloc in Central-Eastern Europe.

The relevance of radical civil society theorised in the works of Kuron (Poland) and Kurad (Hungary) became debatable due to internal difficulties in the aftermath of the successful implantation of liberal democracy post-1989 post-communism. Thus, the focus shifted to liberal civil society with a participatory approach.

13.6 CIVIL SOCIETY IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THOUGHT

Building on the liberal tradition, the modern theories essentially stressed on the positive role of civil society and informed that, “No emancipation is possible in the modern world...without a strong civil society that can strengthen the public sphere and can provide a haven from and a centre of resistance to the Behemoth state.”

The state, through its policy of welfare, seems to have attempted to bridge the gap between the individual and the political state; it has failed to surpass the significance of civil society, one of the most potent tools for democratisation. John Keane has dealt with the state-civil society dichotomy in a more holistic manner. According to him, state and civil society are not to be seen as independent of each other, rather “civil society and state must become the condition for each other’s democratisation.”

With this, civil society could hold the state accountable and the state could ensure vigil over the anarchical tendencies of civil society which might lead to the rise of newer forms of inequality.

In a modern liberal-democratic framework, state laws and mechanisms have relevance of their own which, when overlooked, are likely to disrupt the orderly functioning of the social system. Both, state and civil society are to guard each other without trespassing each other’s spheres of activity.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Define civil society. What are the important elements of civil society?

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.....

.....

2) How do Socrates and Plato differ on dialectic?

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13.7 ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil societies are any organisation of people with policy goals who work within the political process to promote such goals. Groups attempt to influence policy in various ways including:

Advocacy: Organised interests hire representatives to advocate on behalf of the group's interests. Civil societies coordinate with non-profit organisations whose aim is to work for underprivileged sections of the society etc.

Communication: One of the most important features is to facilitate communication in the planning process of public policy which helps in policy making.

Public Accountability: It increases public accountability like civic groups can monitor the substantive benefits and effects of policies at ground level.

Lobbying: It includes contacting members of government and the executive branch to disseminate information about the positive or adverse effects of proposed legislation.

Support System: Civil societies often support government plans and projects in many ways. It often includes mobilising local resources and initiatives for proper planning and management.

Influencing Elections: Interests may attempt to influence elections in order to help get people who support their issues elected or reelected. Electioneering techniques include giving money to candidates, endorsing candidates or issues, and conducting grassroots activities such as get-out-the-vote drives.

Educating Various Publics: Civil society groups work hard to educate the public, government officials, their own members, and potential interest group members.

Mass Mobilisation: To influence policy-making, many groups rely on the efforts of people who are motivated to act on behalf of their issues and causes. So-called grassroots activities might include writing letters, making phone calls, contacting policy-makers, and demonstrating.

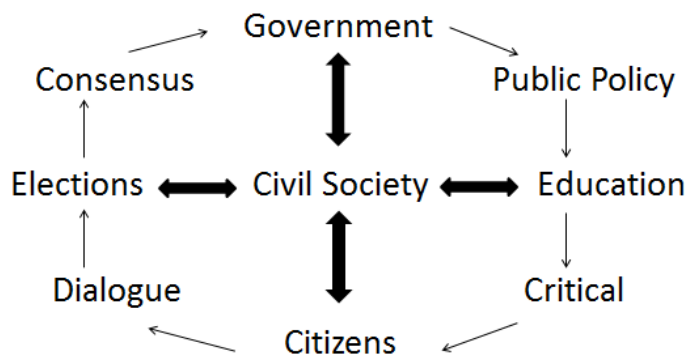
Monitoring: It keeps checks on the functioning of the government and evaluates the government policies for greater transparency via social audit.

Discussion: Involvement in public discourses through debate about governance.

Voice of the Voiceless: It helps in providing a platform or voice to various stakeholders who are hesitant to speak such as farmers, unorganised labourers, and women etc.

Contemporary Issues: It also plays a significant role in highlighting environmental issues like climate change, rainwater harvesting, safe rivers etc.

Diagram 2 shows that civil societies foster legitimacy of the government by providing a bridge for interaction between people and the government.



Source: Civildaily, January 15, 2019

13.8 GLOBALISATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

In the era of globalisation, there has been an upsurge of new social movements beyond regional boundaries. The post-modern perspective throws light on the spread of social networks at global scale and the emergence of civil society as a powerful third sector. Robert D. Putnam in his seminal work 'Bowling Alone' and 'Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy' explained the significance of civil society and established that a responsible government is a consequence of a strong civil society or social capital.

The term civil society has moved beyond its purpose of striving for popular democracy to, what World Bank defines, a wide array of non-governmental and non-profit organisations such as Labour Unions, Charitable Groups, Professional Associations, Educational Institutions, Corporations and Business Groups. They seek to protect the interests of their interests and of the larger society in terms of: ethical, religious, cultural, scientific, and Philanthropic values. Civil society is a sphere distinct from the market and working towards active participation of its members with the purpose of securing their particular interests. Global civil society typically refers to nongovernmental groups such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, and the International Labour Organisation as well as less formal networks of activists and citizens.

Globalisation is a multidimensional activity that is related to the exchange of economic, cultural, political, international ideas and the growth of free-market between nations. This is manifested by the broadening of market relations. Supporters of globalisation believe that it helps to boost the local economy, standard of living of the people, and distribution of national resources etc. It further helps locals to have access to foreign products, acquire knowledge, and use the latest advanced technology.

Although the critics of globalisation argue that this term is a misconception because it harms domestic economies, indigenous communities, poor population, and the environment. There is no doubt about liberalisation and privatisation has created volatility in the market, affecting the small and medium producers. There are several changes that have been brought by globalisation that gave birth to mass movements in South Asia.

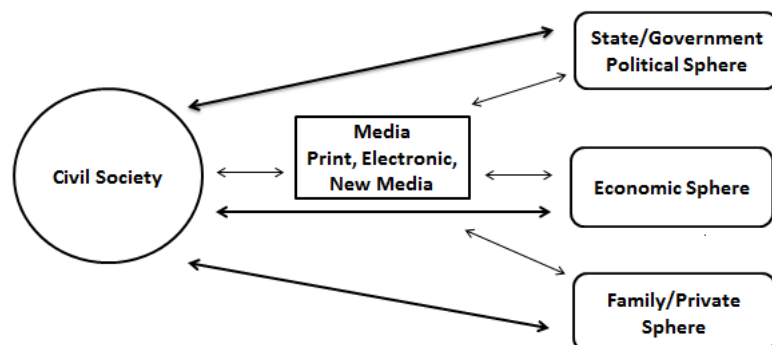
13.9 CIVIL SOCIETIES AND SOUTH ASIA

South Asia is the southern region of Asia, which is defined in geographical, cultural, historical, and religious terms. It includes the countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The role of civil society in developing countries has been very important. It supports every right rule and opposes unfair rules. In the last 20 years, the functioning of ‘civil society’ has become quite popular in the political, administrative, and intellectual fields in South Asia. Social movements in the South Asian region are primarily focused on issues of education, unemployment, caste and class convergence in politics, gender inequality, and rural development etc. For instance, non-profit groups like Cooperation for Peace and Unity (Afghanistan), Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, Ability Bhutan Society (Bhutan), Goonj (India), Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (Pakistan), Maldivian Democracy Network (Maldives), Citizens’ Movement for Peace and Democracy (Nepal), and The Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association (Sri Lanka). The Asia Foundation, British Council, Plan International, Climate Action Network South Asia are some of the non-profit organisations that operate across South Asia.

In addition, there are collective groups such as the World Climate Forum (ASIA), which are formed by various stakeholders, including civil society, government representatives, senior policymakers, advocacy groups, business groups, investors, financiers, and sponsors from countries of the Asian region. These actors discuss climate-related issues in the conferences or through social movements and have an impact on the global level. In simple words, civil society is a parallel sphere even though it is separate in the state. It is an area where citizens gather according to their interests and desires. It is “an area of organised social life that is voluntarily self-generated, sufficiently self-supported and bound by legitimate systems and mutually determined values.”

There are many issues in society that sometimes the government of the country does not even look at it or sometimes ignore. In this regard, civil societies often influence the government to formulate public policy. This sense of responsibility comes when people consider themselves as proactive and responsible citizens of the country. Hence, civil societies act as an important force in any democratic country.

Diagram 3: Main Pillars of Society



Source: Author

In Diagram 3, the Political sphere indicates that civil societies are not government, political parties, inter-party alliances, elites or elected officials who are acting in their official capacity as representatives of the state or nation. It's also not businesses, entrepreneurs, economic elites, financial institutions, or corporations, who exist primarily to make a profit, as can be seen in the Economic sphere. Lastly, it is not purely a private aspect of society such as family or home life. Civil society exists in between these three spheres and includes all of the non-governmental groups, associations, and institutions that citizens form and join.

13.9.1 The Tragedy of Human Rights: A Case Study of Civil Resistance in Afghanistan

The international community was shocked to see the biggest humanitarian tragedy in Afghanistan in Mid-August of 2021. This happened when the United States military decided to leave the country after nearly 20 years and soon after the Taliban began to gain a foothold in the country. Eventually, the government of Afghanistan lost its control. Today, the Taliban control 90 % of Afghanistan's borders. This was a huge crisis whose impact is felt in India as well. Unfortunately, the country's economic situation has already deteriorated since the beginning of the year. The social bond that the Taliban imposes on its own citizens affects women in particular to a great extent.

Despite such a huge tragedy, the civil societies of Afghanistan fought for their rights which cannot be ignored. The world has also witnessed the role played by Afghan women and students when they have sought humanitarian aid from international states and organisations to save their lives. For instance, India has extended a hand for cooperation and has agreed to grant visas to several civil society members, journalists, women activists, students, and to activists of the NGOs. The fact is that instead of taking up arms, common people are resorting to protest and taking out rallies from place to place in which they raise slogans about human rights violations and talk about bringing equality and democracy in their country. For instance, people have raised their voices especially in Herat, Kabul, Ghor Province, and Mazar-i-Sharif, etc.

Many small civil societies in Afghanistan were successfully able to make contact with Taliban forces and are in constant dialogue with them to establish peace. In addition, civil resistance in most cities in Afghanistan has been led by women. The women were seen holding handwritten papers and raising slogans in front of the armed forces.

13.9.2 The Civil Society Alliance for Scaling up Nutrition: Case Study of Pakistan

A civil society organisation called the 'Civil Society Alliance for Scaling up Nutrition' (SUN-CSA) was launched on 23rd December 2014 in Islamabad (Pakistan). Its main objective is to promote food security in the country. Many of its members are health activists, doctors, dieticians, nutritionists, etc. They work in a cooperative way and through seminars and with the help of mass media campaigns often try to bring awareness among the people in society. Another notable work of the organisation is to review the government's policies related to food security policy in Pakistan.

More recently, this organisation has taken the form of a social movement and its members have also expanded their scope to fulfill the goals of the organisation with the 'Global Sun Movement' so that its awareness can be spread to the masses. For instance, on 15-17 October 2016, the SUN-CSA launched the first phase of its #InvestInNutrition campaign with the support of the Micronutrient Initiative. The campaign was started on the day of World Food Day so that the relevance of the campaign could increase not only to Pakistan but to the world level.

As a result, it attracted the attention of many people and other civil society organisations and gave importance to the subject of food security for children and pregnant women who are at risk due to malnutrition in Pakistan. Moreover, some of the civil societies have expressed their desire to work with the SUN-CSA alliance for collective action for the promotion of a healthy and well-nourished nation. The campaign prioritised malnutrition as a multidimensional issue that must be addressed by all sectors. Mass media including television, radio, and newspapers were mobilised to bring the campaign to life.

13.9.3 Farm Bills and Agriculture Reforms: A Case Study Farmers' Protest in India

Recently the government of India introduced three farm bills related to agriculture and these bills were passed by the Parliament in September 2020. The three bills are the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, Farmer's (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020. These bills infuriated the farmers of the nation especially farmers of Punjab and Haryana were out on the streets, organised themselves in gamuts, and agitated against the farm bills. Various farm Unions played a pivotal role in the protests and claimed that it will affect the life of the common man.

The farmers from Punjab and Haryana were out on the streets to protest against these ordinances. The Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) and other farmer organisations sought permission from the Haryana government for a protest rally. On the 10th of September 2020, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led state government denied them permission in view of the Corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic and that a protest during this time would not be right. But the farmers did not pay heed to the government and a rally was organised in which more than 100 farmers rode their tractors to the site of protest and hence some called it the "tractor protest" because farmers were protesting with tractors and were raising slogans of "Save the farmers, save the mandis". The situation turned violent in some places and it is alleged that the farmers were lathi-charged by the police. In addition to this, total shutdown was observed in Punjab while farmers blocked several roads in Haryana. Several state governments like Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra also opposed the bills and started establishing a dialogue with civil society organisations and trade unions to support farmers' protests. In response to the farmers' protest, , on 19th November 2021, Narendra Modi government decided to repeal the three farm laws. Prime Minister said that the goal of the laws was to empower small farmers but despite all efforts, the government

could not convince the trade union. Civil society worldwide took note of the success of farmers groups in reversing the decision of the government.

13.9.4 The Port City *Economic Commission Bill*: Rise of Labour Movement in Sri Lanka

Several opposition parties, civil society groups, and labour unions filed petitions at the Supreme Court on 15th April 2021, challenging the Sri Lankan government's proposed Port City Economic Commission bill on the Chinese-backed Port City in capital Colombo, arguing it "directly affects" Sri Lanka's sovereignty. The Ceylon Federation of Labour voiced concerns over the Bill exempting employers operating within the Port City from compliance with Sri Lanka's labour laws. The government has also faced sharp criticism from the powerful Buddhist Clergy as well.

The bill provides the legal framework for setting up a special economic zone within the Colombo port city and proposes the establishment of a commission empowered to grant registrations, licenses, authorisations, and other approvals to carry on businesses and other activities in the special economic zone. The port city was launched by the Chinese president Xi Jinping during the state visit to the island nation in September 2014 during former president Mahinda Rajapaksa's second term in office.

The Sri Lankan government has promised to expedite the project that it says would attract 15 billion US dollars in investments and emerge as a leading business, retail, residential and tourist destination in South Asia. In view of the growing controversy, the government of Sri Lanka says that there is nothing wrong with this bill and it is a foreign investment in the country. On the other hand, opposition parties say that through this bill, Sri Lanka will fall into the trap of China. Sri Lanka's opposition parties, including the main opposition United People's Front, Janata Vimukti Peramuna, United National Party, as well as the Colombo-based NGO Center for Policy Alternatives and workers' organisations, have opposed the port being built by China. They say that by doing so, the economic dependence on China should not increase further so that the friendship between the two countries should not be spoiled in the future.

13.9.5 The People's Movement in the Struggle for Democracy: A Case Study of Nepal

The People's movement by civil society started in Nepal from the fourth week of December 2020. The reason for the public outcry was mainly the proposal to dissolve the House of Representatives (Lower House) by the Prime Minister of the country, KP Sharma Oli on December 20 and, it was also promptly approved by President Bidya Devi Bhandari. Civil society groups along with ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) rival faction party members termed it an "unconstitutional" and "regressive step" that hurt the spirit of democracy.

The group representing the rival faction of NCP submitted the copy of the Constitution and letter of memorandum to the PM via the chief district officer of Kathmandu. Members of the pressure groups also requested the PM to study it. Members of the interest groups joined mass protests in Kathmandu. Several people were seen gathered in the capital city holding banners of

‘people’s mass movement against regression’. Protesters at Maithighar came together and started blowing shell horns as a part of a demonstration before attending a corner meet. Participants in the demonstration included writers, students, artists, and human rights activists, among others.

Due to this “undemocratic” act on the part of the PM, the NCP faced a vertical split - while one faction is led by PM Oli, the other is led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar from Nepal. Students at Nepal Sanskrit’s University protested this move by performing havan (Vedic rituals) in front of the college, praying ‘good sense’ prevails on PM Oli. They were affiliated with the Dahal-Nepal faction of ruling NCP. Student Union of NCP chanted slogans against the government as they marched towards the district administration office and burned the effigies of PM as a gesture of protest. The issue gained momentum when party leaders declared to organise and continue sit-in-protests, mass rallies, mass meetings, and public meetings. Civil society members called this decision as an expression of their public opinion, votes and it would continue across the country.

13.9.6 Labour Mobility and Security: A Study of Bangladesh Civil Society for Migrants

BCSM was formed in 2016 to host the 9th Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). People from all walks of society are its members such as academicians, researchers, students, NGOs, human rights and women’s rights associations, expatriate groups, private sector, trade unions, and news media are part of this civil society. The current challenges of migrant workers are related to not proper access to the healthcare system, lack of insurance benefits, and no job security. It persists in almost all countries in the world. In view of this, BCSM together with the government of Bangladesh addresses the demands of the rights of migrants. For instance, BCSM is now working on policy engagement on migrants’ rights issues. Its members believe that unless a proper public policy is made by the government, human security cannot be provided. Apart from it, BCSM also works for providing social justice to people of Bangladeshi origin staying abroad.

On 22nd September 2020, BCSM issued a press statement on the death of a young Bangladeshi female domestic worker in Saudi Arabia. The statement called on the Bangladeshi government to hold the recruiting agency and government officials accountable who had illegally sent a young girl to Saudi Arabia, where she was brutally tortured before she was killed. The statement also demanded justice for the family of the young girl, urging for a fair investigation without delay against the perpetrators of the crime. Simultaneously, several consultations and policy support were conducted with the relevant stakeholders and policymakers at the district and national level.

BCSM jointly organised the regional multi-stakeholder consultation on the 13th GFMD with the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA). The consultation was titled ‘The Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development, a Post-Covid-19 Reality’. The speakers said that migrant workers around the world are suffering greatly after the outbreak of coronavirus. They have been stigmatised and harassed financially and

psychologically at home and abroad. Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, Founder President of The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) of Bangladesh said that the current concept of irregular migration criminalises workers. Irregular migration will continue until or unless the employing countries strictly prohibit such recruitment, she added.

13.9.7 Livelihood Security and Economic Empowerment:

A Study of SABAH Bhutan

The SAARC Business Association of Home based workers (SABAH Bhutan) was established in 2010 with funding from the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) as a part of the project “Strengthening Livelihood Initiatives of the Home-Based Workers in the SAARC Region”. SABAH Bhutan is a civil-society organisation of more than 1,000 weavers, mostly women. Home-based workers are perhaps the poorest, the most invisible of women and also the most disempowered. It is a business association of home based workers who are connected with each other through trade and they established market linkages with each other in the region. It provides economic opportunities and resources to the workers like vocational training and supplies with them yarn, dies, new designs with clothes etc. Workers can work from home and still be an economic agent and move ahead in life. The association also supports gender equality and women led-development.

The main aims of work of the association are to promote social welfare of the home-based workers in the country by enhancing and marketing their skills and, thereby, reviving traditional art, skills and designs. Moreover, the scope of the association is wider in the sense that it not only focused on income generation but also securing livelihood through economic empowerment, liberty and fraternity. Women feel more confident because they are able to utilize their true potential into valuable functioning. Their money is now being used to support their family.

Artisans and senior representatives from public institutions of the civil society often participate in study tours and art programs organised abroad in order to become internationally recognised. They believe that it is very important to save the indigenous craft of their country. To help the people of their country they organise workshops with support from the government. It further enhances the knowledge of product development, brand identity, home textile products, and export-quality management, etc. among the artisans.

For instance, from 28th April to 9th May 2019, people of this organisation participated in countries like Laos, Thailand etc. In future, the weavers aim to sell their traditional art to Europe, Japan, and even the United States of America. They often try to influence public policy making and mobilise authorities to launch welfare policy measures that can boost diversification not only in the field of textiles but food processing as well. The association as such aims to improve market access for its products by converting them into fashionable market friendly products under the common maiden sock label and the Saba Bhutan brand. The association runs two units for weaving and tailoring separately in its office in Thimpu and two handicrafts retail outlets in the heart of the Thimpu city.

13.9.8 Rights of Employees Campaign in the Maldives

The Tourism Employees Association of Maldives (TEAM) is a “self-help association” which was formed on 13 July 2008 by young activists in the Maldives. Today, around 5000 activists are members of the association, mostly men. It mainly works for the protection of the rights of employees in the tourism industry. For instance, wages to the workers, salaries on time, no form of discrimination or harassment at the workplace, etc. Its main aim is to create awareness among the workforce regarding labour rights and laws related to it at different workplaces. The main methods of public mobilisation include mass campaigns, use of social media, strikes and peaceful protests, etc. Through the years, TEAM has been able to successfully establish a dialogue between workers and employers. It has played a pivotal role in influencing government policy. Often, they insist the government needs to perform its functions in a more responsible way and should formulate public policy towards workers’ rights.

Over the years, many Maldivians have reported recruitment issues in the tourism industry. Cases are reported where gender discrimination has been found in the workplace especially in the sales and marketing sector. On account of this, TEAM organised a protest on 31st March 2019 demanding the establishment of minimum wage and worker’s rights, wading in the ocean and across a sandbank with picket signs at Angafaru, Baa Atoll.

In many complaint letters, it has been highlighted that women are paid less than men. On the other hand, the workers of western countries are paid more, due to which the skilled class is left far behind even though they are qualified. It has also been observed that there is a difference in benefits and treatment also between Western and Local workers. Due to all these activities, the working class held a silent and peaceful protest keeping in mind their right to secure income. Their main demands are that equal pay for equal work should be given, better working conditions should be given, there should be no abuse and exploitation, as well as healthcare benefits, etc. Recently, the Public Interest Law Centre (PILC), an NGO of Maldives has signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 23rd September 2021 with TEAM to work together in providing legal aid and assistance to workers in employment-related cases.

13.10 CIVIL SOCIETIES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social movements are networks of organisations and unorganised people who work together in loosely formed coalitions for common purpose. The growth of civil society in South Asia has been accompanied by the increase of women’s role in social movements. Some of the examples of the new social movements are the feminist movement in Sri Lanka (KanthaHanda and PAWF -Pacific and Asian Women’s Forum), queer movement in Bangladesh and Nepal (Boys of Bangladesh and The Blue Diamond Society), healthcare reforms (Transparent Hands and Edhi Foundation) in Pakistan and Maldives (Journey), civil rights movements against social injustice in India (Naga Mothers’ Association and Anti-Armed Force Special Protection Act, AFSPA), the peace movement in Nepal (Samjhauta Nepal),

and the green movement in Bhutan (Royal Society for Protection of Nature -RSPN) etc.

Civil Society and social movements are traditionally understood as a sphere of society that's separate from the private sphere and which are the private market employers and the government sphere is the state or the public sector.

New social movements are indicative of people's ideology that they will not accept unsustainable development examples that do not incorporate their ideas or participation. Civil societies are not concerned about seizing the powers of the state through radical revolution, yet they may influence political parties and policymaking. They run parallel to the government and sometimes create a power equivalent to the principal powers of the state. Social movements also reveal how people solve multilateral and simultaneous problems. People's movements arise from the characteristic contrasts of societies and cultures of the transitional period. These may be born out of the contradictions and shortcomings arising out of the role of the state and the division of labor as a result of capital employed by foreign countries. Social movements brought unity on the horizontal rather than hierarchical unity among the people.

Ecological movements in South Asia include climate change, water scarcity, and pollution. Apart from this, there are also moral movements arising out of issues like families and children, poverty reduction, human capital, etc. It has also been seen that this type of movement has greatly increased in South Asia. It also helps the countries to better understand the nature of social issues around the region. Moreover, it acts as a connecting link among the countries in which non-government organisations play a prominent role. Today, civil societies are able to provide an opportunity to spread ideas through soft power diplomacy. This has enhanced development.

13.11 CONTRIBUTIONS BY CIVIL SOCIETY IN INDIA

Several factors are responsible for India being considered as an Asian giant and the leading country in the South Asian region. First, being the rising economy, common religious and linguistic ties put India in a situation to better connect with its immediate neighbours. Moreover, India shares borders with most South Asian countries, making it the vital physical link in the region. The civil society has influenced government decisions time and again through PILs (Public Interest Litigations), social movements, with the help of media, and lobbying etc.

Some of the examples civil society activism in India are as follows:

- **Chipko Movement (1973):** Sunderlal Bahuguna was awarded the Padma Vibhushan and Chandi Prasad Bhatt was honoured with the Ramon Magsaysay Award. Gaura Devi received the Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra award in 1986.
- **Narmada Bachao Movement (1985)** Medha Patkar and Baba Amte, have received the Right Livelihood Award in 1991 for their contribution.

- **Right to Information Movement** - The Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan in Rajasthan was formed in 1 May 1987. Activist Aruna Roy was awarded the Times Fellowships Award for 1991 for her work for rural workers' rights to social justice and creative development. In 2000, she received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership.
- **Child Trafficking** – Bachpan Bachao Andolan founded by Kailash Satyarthi who later received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.
- **LGBTQ Rights Movement** - In 2017, Supreme Court declared section 377 of Indian Penal Code as null and void. Few organisations such as Naz Foundation, Ondede (founded by Akkai Padmashali), and National AIDS Control Organisation etc. played significant contributions in this regard.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace 2013** - Vishakha and Others vs State of Rajasthan. NGOs such as Administrative Democratic Reforms and People's Union for Civil liberties etc. have played pivotal roles in addressing these issues in front of the government and public.

Role played by Non-Government Organisations

- a) Disclosure of Candidate Background (Criminal, Educational and Financial) to Election Commission (2003)
- b) The Supreme Court's Judgement on "None of the Above" (NOTA) (September 2013) provision on the ballot.
- c) Disqualification of Convicted Members of Parliament/Members of Legislative Assembly (2013)
- d) Introduction of WPAT (Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail) etc.

13.12 ROLE OF MEDIA IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Media has some goals of making profit but it also helps to inform citizens about the working of the government and helps hold politicians accountable to the public. So the media plays a central role in civil society. Such new partnerships between civil society and the media can be explained by the many changes that have taken place over the past two decades.

First, the new media has expanded the reach of the 'others' who are far away. The globalisation of Information and Communication Technology has increased the cohesion and reach of civil society by increasing dissemination in a very short time.

Second, the expansion of independent and private institutions of television, radio, and newspapers has provided greater competition and greater choice for civil society, especially in contexts where state media have limited or restricted access to civil society questions about government policies and programmes.

Third, the ability of civil society to engage with the old and new media is gradually increasing due to some special efforts made in recent years. Many young leaders in civil society pay much more attention to media influence

than earlier generations. Effective use of media forms by civil society is needed to energize citizens and expand discourse.

However, the changing nature of today's media indicates that life movements or campaigns by civil society often spread negativity along with appearances. They can also be seen in most of the streets doing street plays or creating noise in television debates. Such a contradiction occurs for several reasons. The first and foremost reason is the changing nature of media ownership which is becoming increasingly commercial and market based. In addition, with the globalisation of media ownership, a distinction is being made between local, regional and global business interests.

In such a situation, the global media expressed different types of reactions to the actions of citizens in the northern and southern countries. Social media and the internet also tend to confuse and distort issues. Due to 'uncontrolled' access, sometimes opposing voices also come regularly. Apart from this, along with giving wrong information, blogs can also confuse. Recent attempts by many governments to control and regulate social media may reduce civil society's access to social media and increase surveillance over civil society.

13.13 CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY

Anthony Giddens says that groups which fall outside the market and government both can be termed as civil society. Government and the market alone are not enough to solve the many challenges in late modern societies. Civil society must be strengthened and joined up with government and business. The role of civil society is to create conditions to end any kind of despotism and empower citizens. Similarly, Jan Art Scholte highlighted how civil society can play a very important role in enhancing democracy.

In the pluralist model of democracy, interest groups play an essential role. Political parties cannot provide adequate representation for the full range of diverse interests and opinions in a modern democracy. Interest groups overcome the democratic insufficiency that builds up as most people's political participation is to cast a vote every five years, this leading to people having little or no influence over decisions made between elections, and minority views not being represented. Interest groups increase participation and access to the political system, thereby enhancing the quality of democracy. Pressure groups improve the quality of government. Consultation with affected groups is the rational way to make decisions in a free society. It makes government more efficient by enhancing the quality of the decision making process – the information and advice provided by groups helps to improve the quality of government policy and legislation. Freely operating pressure groups are essential to the effective functioning of liberal democracy in three main ways: they serve as vital intermediary institutions between government and society; they assist in the spreading of political power; and they provide important counterweights to balance the concentration of power.

Pressure groups enable new concerns and issues to reach the political agenda, thereby facilitating social progress and preventing social stagnation. For instance, the women's and environmentalist movements like Anti-Arrack,

Silent River Valley etc. Pressure groups assist the surveillance of the government by exposing information it would rather keep secret, thereby reinforcing and complementing work of opposition through political parties. Pressure groups thereby improve the accountability of decision makers to electorates.

13.14 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Sometimes the methods used by civil societies often tend to be both aggressive and disruptive. The militant actions used by the groups raise a critique of civil society groups being undemocratic. Elite run and funded civil societies may use black money in the name of assistance. Moreover government agencies in democracy are ill equipped to check such reactionary civil societies. Although raising public awareness and participation does enhance and promote democracy, if the methods used in the process are too violent or militant which are mostly antisocial it is not difficult to see how the pressure groups are often perceived as a threat to a representative democracy.

Representative democracy is the state of government where the nation is governed by 'the people' or elite which is elected frequently by the public to govern the people. It is also the equality of every person in society, which extends certain rights, such as the right to be heard politically. This additionally means that on occasions, the 'unelected' leaders of a pressure group may lobby for certain legislative changes, under the pretense that all of its members are of the same political inclination, whilst some members of the pressure group may not believe in that particular policy.

As a result, although it is clear that civil society groups play an essential role in an open, free democracy, because these groups promote 'people's power and support' and such characteristics of pressure groups participation do obstruct 'true' democracy. Civil societies can allow too much influence over the government from unelected extremist minority groups, which in turn could lead to anti-democratic consequences. The features that many groups and its leaders are elitist, where power and decision-making process are concentrated in the hands of 'unelected' few and a recent trend in civil society group activity has been the increase in illegal direct action, such as property damage, often connected with the new 'social movements' can definitely work as a threat to representative democracy.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) How does Tocqueville distinguish between state society and civil society?

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13.15 ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN INFLUENCING POLICY MAKING

Whenever a policy is made by the government, some non-state actors such as civil society provide a contribution. Wherever there is a need to suggest what kind of welfare policies should be made by the government, it is the civil society that does the communication work. Apart from this, civil society sometimes also helps the government in making laws and rules. This is also because civil society is a part of society and they have a better idea of what resources are available at the local level or such. They suggest which method should be adopted so that there is minimum loss and planning can also be done smoothly.

There was a tragedy due to the eruption of the glacier in February 2021 in Uttarakhand and Rini village also came under its grip. Moreover, a huge loss of human life and property was recorded. In view of this, those whose houses were submerged had come forward and signed public interest litigation in the court. Due to the Dam's high power capacity, the local people have raised their point to stop such hydroelectric projects in nearby areas. Local people claim that such projects threaten climate change and bring negative impacts on the environment and ecology.

After this, the civil society by running an awareness program spread awareness that the action taken by the government to pass this project was wrong. The villagers of Rini village had already warned the government that the construction of a hydroelectric dam would cause problems in the future. It was seen that decentralisation can help local people, especially to understand which laws should be implemented. Therefore, civil society is a two-way process that transmits the action of the government to the citizens and the mood and behavior of the citizens to the government. It further helps the government to always calculate the cost and benefit analysis before taking any action.

13.16 RESOURCES AND PRINCIPAL TACTICS OF CIVIL SOCIETIES

This section explores the different ways that the members of civil society employ to influence policymaking in South Asia. Members utilize their individual capabilities and resources and become active in the process of bringing social reforms. Since lobbyists are outsiders, their influence is usually short-lived. Otherwise, NGOs, trade unions, interest groups, etc. always try to influence politics and administration. Their aim is to give a clear message to the people about the issue or policy decision. It often gets favorable media coverage which ultimately helps the civil societies to put forward their demands before the system.

13.16.1 Lobbying Government

Lobbying is the act of attempting to influence decisions made by officials in government, most often by legislators or members of regulatory agencies. Lobbying is also done by many different types of people and organised groups including individuals involved in the private sector, corporations, fellow legislators or government officials, or advocacy groups. Lobbyists

can be in an MLA's constituencies, meaning a block or electoral district of voters, lobbying for a group or individual or influencing legislation. Professional lobbyists are people whose business is trying to influence the law on behalf of a group or individual who hires them. Individuals and non-profit organisations may also lobby as an act of volunteering or as a small part of their normal job. The government often defines and regulates the lobbying of the organised group that has become dominant.

Lobbying is often termed with contempt when it implies that people with extraordinary socio-economic power are corrupting the law to fight for their own interests. For instance, In January 2012, the famous coffee shop company 'Starbucks' got permission to do business with India. According to the documents presented before the United States of America's Senate, the company spent more than Rs 1 crore in the first six months of 2011 to make its market debut in India. The list of companies lobbying for entry into India includes financial services major Morgan Stanley, New York Life Insurance, Prudential Financial as well as technology companies such as Intel, Dow Chemicals, etc.

13.16.2 Public Interest Litigations (PILs)

PIL is the process of putting a public issue before the eyes of the law. It's a mechanism that helps the vulnerable get justice. Justice should be granted to one and all irrespective of whether rich or poor. PIL helps in striking a balance between the two classes to provide justice to one and all. The courts must keep an eye on cases being filed and ensure the bonafide interest of the petitioner and the nature of the cause of action in order to avoid unnecessary litigations. Vexatious and mischievous litigation must be identified and struck down so that the objectives of PIL aren't violated. PIL along with other tools like judicial review, activism, etc. can be used to attain complete independence of justice machinery.

13.16.3 Human Chain and Publicity

The human chain is one of the methods to create awareness among people in society. In this tens of thousands of people come together and form a human chain by joining hands across the length of the area. Protestors from all walks of life come and participate in it without hesitation. A human chain can be formed in support of social issues such as the prohibition of liquor, cutting trees, water conservation, child marriage, drug de-addiction, reform in education policy, etc.

It has been seen in recent years that the method has gained importance. Many people play an active part in the human chain activity and the government also takes necessary steps to capture an aerial view of it with the help of drones to monitor all the routes. Bureaucrats also carry out preparations according to the number of people in their respective areas so that the participating people do not face any problems. For this, bureaucrats also take help from the local level Panchayats to spread the publicity of an issue at the local level. This way they all work in broader solidarity.

13.16.4 Strikes and Protests

Strikes and protests are common techniques of civil societies. In very simple terms, strike refers to the stoppage of work like disrupting road traffic,

blocking rail tracks, burning effigies, nationwide shutdown, etc. This is a temporary stoppage of work for a specific reason and work will not resume until the settlement of the grievances is affected. Media plays a prominent role in creating awareness among the masses about an issue.

For instance, print media like newspapers and magazines cover issues of trade union groups that are doing strikes to fulfill their demands. Demands may be the increase of remuneration, cut in electricity rates, regular source of income for farmers, farm bills, reduced duration of work, and others. In many cases, they are successful in fulfilling their demands. It is only possible because of civil societies.

13.16.5 Mass Campaigns

People's campaigns are often an important step in introducing new services, new thinking, positive initiatives, programs, facilities, or actions to the people. It aims to introduce a desired behavior such as free polio or Covid-19 vaccination.

Thus, the purpose of raising awareness is to inform the intention to positively influence the achievement of a defined objective or goal in the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs of a community. The work of building public opinion in society on social justice, women's security, famine, forced labour, oppression, corruption, and such issues are also done by mass campaigns.

Awareness campaigns about the plight and abuse of the transgender community have led to advocacy work in schools and universities and in private sector institutional settings to combat discrimination and stigma. Such mass campaigns have impacted the banning of these and the sale of acid substances in public places due to the ill effects of acid attacks.

Such campaigns are appreciated by feminist movements, human rights activists, NGOs, media. This is the reason that to prevent the crisis of domestic violence in India, political and policy rules were made and security was implemented in India. In 2005, the Domestic Violence Act Protection of Women against Domestic Violence was enacted and the Transgender Bill 2019 for the LGBTQ community also came in India.

Awareness campaigns in media-oriented advocacy work include many types of strategies, including preparing news releases, photographing or videotaping, signing hoardings, creating or distributing posters, data collection, etc. Techniques such as email and text messaging special video games for kids, 24*7 call centers, and the use of social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram are examples that provide assistance with alliance building and mobilisation.

Check Your Progress 3

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) How does civil society promote democracy?

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- 2) What are the different techniques used by civil societies to influence public policy?

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13.17 LET US SUM UP

Civil society as a concept is highly flexible. The term has been used in the liberal traditions, in the Marxist traditions and otherwise it is popularly used in the most flexible form so in other words what do you mean to say that there is no one single definition of civil society. Civil societies help connect people to their communities. Many civil societies strive to improve society by influencing the political, economic, and social spheres. Often they are in conflict with one another but most importantly they show us that there are many ways beyond voting or running for office to become involved in issues that one really cares about. It is argued by scholars that the more democratic the civil society is, the more democratic the state will be and vice-versa.

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13.19 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Civil society is defined as a community of citizens linked by common interests, emotions, values or purposes and collective activity. Some of the important elements of civil society are freedom from profit making and administrative regulations, constructive actions at grassroots level, ideas to bring a social change, and chances for professionals to join movements for noble causes.
- 2) Plato considered dialectic to be merely a method of dialogue, Plato's dialectic aimed not just to communicate, but to seek truth. Socrates taught that conflicts within society should be resolved through public reasoning using 'dialectical', a form of rational dialogue to uncover truth through question and answering methodology. For Plato, the dialectic is an argument or debate in which one has a point and subsequent counterpoint with reason and logic and in that way, they come to know the truth out of the matter.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) According to Tocqueville, state was a set of formal governmental bodies such as Parliament, courts, police, bureaucracy, whereas civil society implied at non-state civilised associations of individuals such as parties, public opinion, churches, schools, commercial organisations, organisations for leisure and recreation etc. that simultaneously check the excessive centralisation of power by the state.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Civil societies improve the quality of the government. Consultation with affected groups is the rational way to make decisions in a free society. It makes the government more efficient by enhancing the quality of the decision making process.
- 2) To achieve their objectives and goals, the civil societies employ various techniques and methods. These include lobbying, petitions, appeals, sit-in protests, candle light marches, mass campaigns, human chain, civil disobedience, social movements, encirclement, shutdowns, picketing, and processions etc.

UNIT 14: SAARC

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Charter and its principles
- 14.3 Areas of Cooperation
- 14.4 Summits and important outcomes
- 14.5 Regional Centres
 - 14.5.1 SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Dhaka
 - 14.5.2 SAARC Energy Centre (SEC), Islamabad
 - 14.5.3 SAARC Cultural Centre (SCC), Colombo
 - 14.5.4 SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), Kathmandu
 - 14.5.5 SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC), Delhi
- 14.6 Role of observers
- 14.7 SAPTA to SAFTA
- 14.8 In compare to EU and ASEAN
- 14.9 Role of China
- 14.10 Control of Afghanistan by the Pakistan backed Taliban
- 14.11 Hurdles in Progress
- 14.12 How to make SAARC more effective
- 14.13 Relevance
- 14.14 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.15 References
- 14.16 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

14.0 OBJECTIVES:

With the dawn of the twenty-first century, most of the South Asian economies have registered impressive growth trajectories. Some of its countries have also emerged as the hub of global terrorism. The international community has become far more involved in South Asian affairs due to the nuclearisation of the region. SAARC has to keep pace with the changing regional dynamics. In the above background, the aim of the Unit is:

- to explain the different aspects of SAARC;
- its principles;
- outcome of the different summits;
- areas of cooperation;
- hurdles in progress; and
- its relevance today.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was founded in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. Its secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. SAARC has eight members e.g. Afghanistan (inducted in 2006), Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The idea of the SAARC itself was put on the table by Bangladesh President Ziaur Rehman in the late 1970s with a view to containing the “hegemony” of India in South Asia - a view fuelled by the structural asymmetry between India and its smaller South Asian neighbours.

SAARC comprises 3% of the world’s area, 21% of the world’s population and 3.8% (US\$2.9 trillion) of the global economy. It is the world’s most densely populated region and one of the most fertile areas. The members of this grouping have a lot in common as a result of their shared history and shared geography. There is a cultural and civilizational heritage which provides the platform to pursue their common interests. Also, the SAARC countries have common tradition, dress, food and culture and political aspects thereby synergizing their actions. All the SAARC countries have also common problems and issues like poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, natural disasters, internal conflicts, industrial and technological backwardness, low GDP and poor socio-economic condition and uplift their living standards thereby creating common areas of development and progress having common solutions. India dominates the grouping because of its size, population, economy, technological superiority, scientific progress etc.

14.2 CHARTER AND ITS PRINCIPLES

SAARC was established with two primary objectives: one, to promote regional integration in South Asia by improving connectivity and people-to-people relations; and second, to promote economic integration of South Asian countries by reducing trade barriers. Keeping the apprehensions of both India and its smaller neighbours in mind, SAARC developed a charter which would guide its functioning based on: sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in domestic matters.

The Charter bodies are the main mechanisms of SAARC. These include the Summit, Council of Ministers, Standing Committee, Programming Committee, Technical Committees and Action Committees. The Summit is the highest decision making authority in SAARC. The Member State hosting the Summit assumes the Chair of the Association until the next such meeting hosted by another Member State. The key outcome of the SAARC Summit is the Declaration. It contains decisions and directives of the Heads of State or Government to strengthen regional cooperation in the agreed areas. SAARC operates on the principle of consensus means that decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of consensus. Also, bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from the deliberations.

14.3 AREAS OF COOPERATION

The SAARC agenda has focus on non-controversial areas of cooperation known as “SAARC integrated programme of action” or “Regional Program

of action”. The areas are- Agriculture & Rural development, Transport & Communication, Science & Technology, Culture, Health, Population control, Sports and Arts. Small states of SAARC were not interested in putting trade & commerce on the agenda of SAARC as they were apprehensive that such a move will flood their market with Indian goods given the relatively larger size of India’s economy.

14.4 SUMMITS AND THE IMPORTANT OUTCOMES

SAARC Summits are held biennially and are hosted by the member states in alphabetical order. In December 1985, at Dhaka, South Asian countries leaders unanimously issue a declaration for the creation of SAARC. The second Summit of SAARC was held at Bangalore in 1986. At this summit, they institutionalised SAARC by establishing a permanent secretariat to coordinate the implementation of the SAARC programme. Above all, the Summit called upon the member states not to allow their territories to be used for terrorist activities against another state. The leaders agreed to cooperate in combating and eliminating terrorism from the region.

The third SAARC Summit was held at Kathmandu in 1987 that greatly contributed to the creation of an atmosphere conducive to the strengthening of the process of consolidation of the gains of SAARC. At side-lines, high level India-Pak dialogue at various levels and several rounds of talks between India’s PM Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayawardane of Sri Lanka was possible. The Fourth SAARC Summit was held at Islamabad in 1988 in which the leaders decided for elimination of menace of drugs and terrorism. The leaders welcomed the establishment of South Asian Food Security Reserve to assist each other in food emergency situation. The Fifth SAARC Summit was held at Male in 1990. The leaders of SAARC countries agreed to initiate steps for launching Joint Ventures in cottage industries and handicrafts to ‘set the stage for promoting collective self-reliance in the region’. Sixth SAARC Summit held at Colombo in 1991 in which leaders agreed to liberalise trade in the region and gave a call for greater cooperation and interaction among member states to combat terrorism in the region.

The Seventh SAARC Summit was held at Dhaka in 1993 which endorsed the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) for the liberalisation of trade. The other notable decisions taken at the Summit included establishment of South Asian Development Fund (SADF). The Eighth SAARC Summit was held in New Delhi in 1995. The members agreed to operationalise SAPTA by 8 December 1995. The Summit also decided to establish a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) to promote intra-regional trade. The ninth SAARC summit was held in Male in 1997 and asserted that the sub-regional co-operation, instead of being abandoned, should be further extended. The members agreed to hold informal political consultations to reduce tension in the region. The tenth summit was held in Colombo in 1998. The leaders agreed for coordination of SAARC position before the WTO and encouragement of sub-regional cooperation.

The eleventh summit was held in Kathmandu in 2002. The leaders reiterated their support to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 of

September 28, 2001 and called on all states to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts by criminalizing the collection of funds for such acts and refraining from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in states or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory directed towards the commission of such acts. In the twelfth summit, held in Islamabad in 2004, leaders pledged to enhance regional cooperation as well as collective efforts to fight against poverty and terrorism. In thirteenth Summit, held at Dhaka in 2005, leaders endorsed the SAARC Development Goals to alleviate poverty. The important outcome of the fourteenth summit, held at Delhi, 2007, was in terms of two very important intergovernmental agreements: to establish the SAARC Food Bank and the South Asian University. The Food Bank was to be developed as an exemplary model of regional cooperation to collectively meet our region's food shortages in times of emergencies and natural calamities. The South Asian University was meant to be developed as a centre of excellence in higher education for the entire region. It was to be yet another milestone in the history of SAARC.

The fifteenth Summit held in 2008, in Colombo concluded with the adoption of the Colombo Declaration on Food Security. Noting the impact of climate change on livelihoods, leaders called for a study on the human dimension of climate change. As an equitable basis for tackling climate change, they endorsed per capita emissions targets for developing and developed countries. Climate change was the central issue of the 16th Thimpu summit, held in 2010, with summit's theme "Towards a Green and Happy South Asia" and the members signed a SAARC Convention on Cooperation on Environment to tackle the problem of climate change. In Addu, Maldives, the seventeenth SAARC summit was held in 2011. The leaders agreed to finalize the Regional Railways Agreement and to convene the Expert Group Meeting on Motor Vehicles Agreement in order to harness the full potential of economic opportunities.

The 18th and the last SAARC summit was held in 2014 at Kathmandu. SAARC has had no summit-level meetings since that. The next meeting have been called off due to India-Pakistan tensions which was scheduled to be held in Islamabad on November 15-16, 2016. However, following Pakistan's involvement in the Uri (India) terror attack on September 18, 2016 India expressed its inability to participate in the Summit. Soon after, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka also pulled out of the Summit, citing fears of regional insecurity caused by Pakistan and a lack of a conducive environment for the talks. Nepal was unable to withdraw from the Summit as it was the chairperson of SAARC. In the aftermath of the Uri attacks, India engaged in coercive diplomacy against Pakistan in order to isolate Pakistan from the international community for sponsoring terrorism in the region.

14.5 REGIONAL CENTRES

Since 1989, a number of regional centres with specific mandates have been established to strengthen and promote regional cooperation.

14.5.1 SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Dhaka

SAC was established in 1989 with the mandate to provide timely, relevant and universal access to information and knowledge resources to all the agricultural practitioners of the SAARC Member Countries to achieve their respective goals through networking agricultural knowledge and information systems by adopting appropriate information and communication technologies, management practices standards.

14.5.2 SAARC Energy Centre (SEC), Islamabad

SEC was established in 2006 with the mandate to provide technical inputs for the SAARC Working Group (and other) meetings on Energy, and will facilitate accelerating the integration of energy strategies within the region by providing relevant information, state-of-the-art technology and expertise.

14.5.3 SAARC Cultural Centre (SCC), Colombo

SCC was established in 2009 with the mandate to promote regional unity through cultural integration and intercultural dialogue and contribute towards preservation, conservation and protection of South Asia's cultural heritage within the framework of the SAARC Agenda for Culture.

14.5.4 SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), Kathmandu

STAC was established in 1992 with the mandate to prevent and control Tuberculosis in the region by coordinating efforts and to exchange of information, research, capacity building and implement activities on the latest developments and findings in the field of tuberculosis in the region and elsewhere.

14.5.5 SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC), Delhi

SDMC was re-established in November 2016 for expanded role by merging four erstwhile SAARC Centres viz. (1) SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC - New Delhi, India); (2) SAARC Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC - Dhaka, Bangladesh); (3) SAARC Forestry Centre (SFC - Thimphu, Bhutan); (4) SAARC Coastal Zone Management Centre (SCZMC - Male, Maldives) with the mandate to support Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives through application of science & technology, knowledge from multiple disciplines, exchange of best practices, capacity development, collaborative research and networking in line with the Global Priorities / Goals and other relevant frameworks adopted by Member States.

14.6 ROLE OF OBSERVERS

The SAARC's engagement with the observers is based on the Guidelines for Cooperation with Observers, adopted at the Colombo summit in 2008. SAARC has nine Observers: Australia, China, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Mauritius, Myanmar, the USA, and the European Union. Observers are those that have kind of political-economic interest in the region but far removed geographically. Observers don't enjoy the same rights as member states which includes voting rights, direct participation in core discussions

or start a strategic dialog and the like. The Kathmandu Declaration, 2014 has called for engaging the Observers in 'productive, demand-driven and objective project-based cooperation in priority areas as identified by the member states'.

14.7 SAPTA TO SAFTA

The idea of including trade and commerce on the agenda of SAARC was first given a concrete form with the signing of SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) at Dhaka in 1993. It provided for the adoption of various instruments of trade liberalization on a preferential basis and to assist the less developed countries in the region. SAPTA was launched in 1995.

However, SAPTA could not make any desired progress promotion of intra-regional trade. The volume of intra-regional trade increased only marginally. The major limitation was the actual trade coverage of preferential trade granted. The concessions granted by the countries were not substantial enough to increase the overall trade of the region. Also, it had no mechanism to resolve trade related disputes. SAPTA also suffered from the drawbacks like no targets for tariff reduction were earmarked for individual states, countries were meant to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers in a gradual manner with no time limits, countries provided a positive list (rather than a negative list of items) which could be traded under Preferential Trading Arrangement.

In 2004, SAARC Summit at Islamabad, South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) was signed to strengthen the economic integration. In 2006, SAFTA was implemented with aim to reduce tariff barriers in a time bound manner. As per SAFTA, South Asia was to become a free trade zone by 2016. Instead of positive list, concept of sensitive list was introduced. This would include items which would not be subjected to time bound commitment with regard to tariff reduction. Maximum tariff was put in the range of 0-5%. A dispute resolution mechanism for tariff and non-tariff barriers related disputes were also agreed upon. A compensation clause was introduced to make up for the loss of revenue initially of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and were to be compensated with a development aid for a limited period. It is important to note that less than 10% of the region's internal trade takes place under SAFTA. So, to strengthen it, India announced the removal of 46 textile items from India's negative list in SAARC Summit, 2011. India also removed all the 25 items on sensitive list for LDCs of SAARC. India also gave five South Asian partners duty free access to 99.7% of their goods to Indian markets besides opening border hats at Meghalaya & Tripura for Bangladesh.

However, SAFTA has continued to face certain challenges as of relations between India & Pakistan remained a crucial factor for the success of SAFTA. Also, FTAs have greater chances of success when the economies are complimentary, whereas South Asian economies are more competitive in nature. Also, there is an absence of strong rail, road, air and port connectivity links between the various South Asian countries. Further, a number of non-tariff barriers exists in the different member countries that include strict visa-regime, differences in standardization and customs practices etc.

In the era of globalisation and economic integration, SAFTA could be effective with enhanced connectivity across borders, creation of a South Asian brand, liberalized visa regime for businesses and freedom to invest across borders.

14.8 In Comparison to EU and ASEAN

SAARC is one of the least integrated regions of the world, as compared to Europe or South East Asia. Political issues between member countries have constantly superseded SAARC's economic interests. With intra-regional trade at less than 5% of total trade, South Asia struggles for economic integration, dwarfed by East Asia's 35% and Europe's 60%. It's 20% cheaper for India to trade with Brazil than with its neighbor Pakistan. Bangladesh's exports to India have potential to rise by 300%. Further, under EU, European countries have established a common market for goods, a common currency, also it provides visa free travel for countries which are part of Schengen Agreement. ASEAN has moved forward to unify the region under what was called the 'ASEAN Way' based on the ideals of non-interference, informality, minimal institutionalisation, consultation and consensus, non-use of force and non-confrontation. But, the South Asian region misses the above, and needs to move ahead.

14.09 Role of China

The structural asymmetry between size of India & its South Asian neighbours provides a fertile ground for apprehensions to crop up between the member states. We know that China is using its 'debt- trap' diplomacy tactics under much publicised Belt and Road initiative (BRI) to woo the countries of the region. China, an observer in the grouping, has been pushing for getting a permanent membership of SAARC. However, no decision has been taken on the matter because there is no consensus among the members including India. In this context, the advocacy of inclusion of China as a member by Pakistan and now Nepal, in recent times, is to be seen as an attempt to counter India's role. Since its inception, SAARC was seen as a tool by some countries to contain India, while India has also its own apprehensions that the organization may be used by smaller states to score political points against it at multilateral forums.

14.10 CONTROL OF AFGHANISTAN BY THE PAKISTAN BACKED TALIBAN

The scourge of terrorist violence arising from the Pakistan-backed 'Talibanization' of Afghanistan has severely affected the South Asian region, causing extensive loss of human life, and colossal damage to and destruction of property. It has also threatened peace, harmony and good neighbourly relations, adversely impinging upon the prospects of regional cooperation among one another. With Pakistan being steadfast in its support for the Taliban and the rest of SAARC wary to acknowledge the group, any future SAARC Summit is unlikely until the issue has been resolved.

14.11 HURDLES IN PROGRESS

The political climate prevailing in the region is not conducive to successful working. The bilateral relations between two of the largest members of

SAARC, India-Pakistan, have had casted a long shadow over the idea of SAARC. Moreover, Pakistan has never supported the idea of strengthening SAARC as it fears that India will occupy centre stage within the grouping. Also, there is the high level of trust deficit between South Asian nations as a result of pending border conflicts, water sharing conflicts, cross-border terrorism, refugee's issues etc. between the members of the region.

Further, lack of political stability amongst member states of SAARC over the past decades also complicates the efforts aimed at building sustainable partnerships. The disparity in the regional resources of various member states hampers the growth of true cooperation. India, in comparison with other countries of the region is not only very large in size but also possesses disproportionate natural resources. As a result, the smaller states always suffer from the fear that SAARC would enhance their dependence on India. Though all the countries of SAARC are under-developed, but their stage of development differs. Countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are more advanced than Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. As a result, the less developed countries are always apprehensive that in the present scheme of cooperation they are bound to be at a disadvantage.

Another shortcoming of the SAARC is its infrastructural deficit, which leads to a lack of connection among member nations. As a result, trading opportunities between its members have been limited. Further, the lack of interdependence of the countries of the matters of trade also poses a serious challenge. Only countries like India in this region can supply large region in quantities of manufactured goods to other South Asian countries, but India can hardly purchase any important goods from the countries of South Asia. Also, the slow pace of cooperation among the members of SAARC has rendered the organisation ineffective. Likewise, the progress in the field of economic cooperation has also been rather slow. The bilateral wrangles among member states have also adversely affected the working of SAARC. Though the SAARC charter bars discussion of contentious bilateral issues and insists on unanimity of decisions, yet the above differences have hampered its smooth working.

At the Thimpu Summit in Bhutan, in 2010, member states expressed their frustration with SAARC's sluggish progress. India expressed its disappointment putting that "the glass of regional cooperation, regional development and regional integration is half empty" and emphasized that "the region must be better connected, empowered, fed and educated" to achieve comparable success with other regional organizations. Also, in 2014, India's Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi, at 18th SAARC Summit in Kathmandu, observed that "nowhere in the world are collective efforts more urgent than in South Asia; and, nowhere else is it so modest." He also observed that "each of South Asian Countries has taken our own initiatives. However, as SAARC, we have failed to move with the speed that our people expect and want".

Further, it is important to note that most of the South Asian states suffer from a 'democratic deficit'. The political insecurity emanating from the lack of democratic stability in SAARC member states which has ramifications at the regional level. Since most of the engagement between SAARC member

states occurs at a bilateral level, whenever the government changes in a particular state, its relationships with other SAARC member states get affected. This happens primarily because mostly successive government is antagonistic towards the policies of its political opponents. Due to the shaky democratic credentials of many South Asian states, terms such as ‘crisis of governance’ or ‘failed state’ have been used to characterize them.

14.12 HOW TO MAKE SAARC MORE EFFECTIVE

Instead of taking up new areas in its Summit declarations, SAARC should focus on trade, connectivity and security. On the trade front, the emphasis has to be on effective implementation of the free trade pact, paring the sensitive lists, eliminating non-tariff barriers and harmonising standards and customs procedures. Time line for rail, sea connectivity-has to be determined and implemented seriously. There should be more frequent business and bureaucratic machineries meetings with an objective to impart a political momentum for monitoring the implementation of member’s commitments made at the Summit.

There is also the need to develop a regional identity. In this context, increasing people-to-people ties is paramount. Only a regional identity will generate a regional approach and not the other way around. Effective communication and public diplomacy is essential to reach out to students, youth, private media, think tanks, civil society and institutions for economic development. This would be important to popularize the concept of regional cooperation and generate an interest among the people of the region on the activities of SAARC. It would essentially build the image of the organization.

Sharing and learning from diverse experiments of the SAARC member states for instance, the micro-level poverty alleviation initiatives like Rural Advancement Committee and the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, Small Farmer Development Programme of Nepal, Self-Employed Women’s Association and Pani-Panchayats of India, Janashakti Banku Sangam of Sri Lanka and Mongar District Health Project of Bhutan etc. The strategy of knowledge creation emphasizes the importance of producing alternative knowledge-base for promoting the cause of regional integration in South Asia. The establishment of various regional research institutions and the launching of the South Asian University can be considered as significant achievements in this regard.

In context of Pakistan’s consistent use of terrorism as a foreign policy tool against India, search for alternatives to SAARC has acquired a new momentum. From the 1990s till 2015, India placed a lot of hope in SAARC in order to achieve the objectives for the sake of ensuring the well-being of the region. But, Pakistan’s state-sponsored terrorism repeatedly derailed the SAARC process. Finally, 2016 marked a breaking point for India when Pakistan-based terror outfit carried out the Uri attack. India came up with the “SAARC minus Pakistan” strategy especially to isolate Pakistan in South Asia. This refers to moving ahead in regional cooperation without Pakistan e.g. BBIN, a formulation involving sub-regional cooperation on connectivity, trade and energy, people-to-people ties between Bhutan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The BBIN, however, is very much part of the

SAARC framework. The SAARC charter allows two or more countries of the forum to embark on what is called ‘sub-regional cooperation’. India has continued to engage with other regional groupings and regional projects where Pakistan is also a member which includes the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Ashgabat Agreement, and the Tapi Pipeline Project in hope that Pakistan will not continue its hostile policy against India, and would adopt a development oriented policy and also abide the international law.

The South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) program of Asian Development Bank, brings together Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka in a project-based partnership that aims to promote regional prosperity, improve economic opportunities, and build a better quality of life for the people of the sub-region. Since 2001, SASEC countries have implemented several regional projects worth over \$10 billion in the energy, economic corridor development, transport, trade facilitation, and information and communications technology sectors. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) also brings five South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka) together with two other South-east Asian countries (Myanmar and Thailand).

India had also proposed the Motor Vehicle Agreement on the SAARC platform to promote regional integration and connectivity in South Asia. Also, India’s Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi proposed the idea of SAARC Satellite to benefit the region. The SAARC satellite was renamed later as the South Asia Satellite. Further, energy security appears to be both a promising and a challenging task. Politics has to be set aside in establishing energy linkages in the form of oil and gas pipelines or electric power grid and transmission line and ensuring that region’s abundant energy potential, particularly hydropower, is optimally harnessed and judiciously accessed.

SAARC for the time being seems to be becoming redundant. However, success in other regional integration initiative might help Pakistan see the benefit and then SAARC can be revived. Thus, instead of focusing on Pakistan, India must devote itself to bilateral, sub-regional and trans-regional cooperation with our neighbors, all of whom except Pakistan want India to do more.

14.13 RELEVANCE

Despite these setbacks, SAARC has achieved a modicum of success. It has provided a platform for representatives from member countries to meet and discuss important issues, something that may have been challenging through bilateral discussions. India and Pakistan for example would struggle to publicly justify a meeting when tensions between the two are particularly high, but representatives from both countries could come together under the banner of SAARC.

The bloc has also made some headway in signing agreements related to drug trafficking, education, poverty eradication, climate change, food security and combatting the global Covid-19 crisis. The challenges and vulnerabilities posed by the pandemic has made the need to re-embrace

regional understanding and solidarity more critical now than ever before. South Asian countries must strive towards deeper regional integration with a focus on resilient recovery and building back better. On initiative of India's PM Sri Narendra Modi, all the SAARC countries hold a video conference in March 2020 to draw a joint roadmap to fight the coronavirus pandemic in the region. It has the potential to do far more but that is contingent upon cooperation on key issues between the member states.

14.14 LET US SUM UP

The idea of a South Asian solidarity still has the potential to detoxify the deeply conflict-ridden political environment in South Asia. The most positive factor in favour of regional co-operation in South Asia has been growing realisation among the countries of the region that the co-operation should not be imposed from above, rather it should grow from within. The very institutionalization of SAARC as a regional governance structure remains a landmark achievement. The main rationale behind institutionalizing SAARC was to develop a congenial atmosphere through Summit diplomacy where all South Asian states could interact peacefully with each other, cultivate sustainable peace and promote mutual economic wellbeing by exploiting available resources in the region. Despite several misgivings, it cannot be denied that the formation of SAARC is a significant step forward because it could stimulate regional co-operation through collective approach and action. No doubt the member countries had different political systems, ideologies and links, but they also beset with identical problems of growth and development which encouraged them to co-operate with each other and evolve a common approach for development.

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14.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

1. Define SAARC. What are its objectives?
2. What is SAFTA? Describe its role in economic integration of South Asia.
3. How re-emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan put shadow on future of SAARC?
4. Do you think that Pakistan sponsored cross-border terrorism has obstructed the process of SAARC?
5. Identify some of the achievements of SAARC.
6. Give your suggestions to make the SAARC more effective.
7. Do you think that SAARC has lost its relevance? Critically examine the case.

UNIT 15: DYNAMICS OF SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY

Structure

15.0 Objectives

15.1 Introduction

15.2 Concept of Security

15.3 Contextualizing South Asia

15.3.1 Geo-strategic Context

15.3.2 Political Context

15.3.3 Economic Context

15.3.4 Socio-cultural Context

15.4 Security Dynamics of South Asia

15.4.1 Traditional Security Dynamics

15.4.2 Non-traditional Security Dynamics

15.5 Response to Security Dynamics by South Asian Countries

Let Us Sum Up

Answers to Check Your Progress Exercise

References

15.0 OBJECTIVES

As part of understanding South Asia, we have discussed various aspects of the region in four major Units: ‘South Asia as a Region’; ‘Diversity and Pluralism in South Asia’; Issues in Development, and Conflict and Cooperation in South Asia. The last Unit – ‘Dynamics of South Asian Security’ – is crucial in determining how countries of the region have been progressing all along since the decolonization in 1940s. The objective of this Unit is to comprehend the security dynamics of South Asia in both conceptual and empirical terms.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

South Asia, at one point dubbed as the “most dangerous region”, is now considered as one of the “insecure regions”. The perilousness has increased with the onset of Taliban’s rule in Afghanistan in August 2021. Security dynamics of South Asia is unique for various reasons:

- India’s predominance in the region making it as one country-dominant;
- Presence of two adversarial nuclear-weapon countries (India and Pakistan) along with another nuclear weapons power in the proximity (China);
- Strategic location of the region in both continental and maritime domains;
- Colonial past, direct or indirect, witnessed by all the countries of the region;

- One of the most populous and impoverished regions;
- Witnessed or have been witnessing conventional and sub-conventional conflicts incessantly;
- Sandwiched between ‘Golden Triangle’ and Golden Crescent’, the two most prominent psychotropic drug producing regions; and
- Significant presence of extra-regional actors like the United States and China in strategic and economic domains.

No wonder South Asia has emerged as a “critical region with complex security”. It is, therefore, important to comprehend the security dynamics of South Asia with a clear conceptual understanding.

15.2 CONCEPT OF SECURITY

The concept of ‘security’ has evolved over a period of time and is fluid. For each one of us, ‘what constitutes security’ is different and is liable to change along with spatio-temporal context. It is for this reason, Barry Buzan labeled security as an “essentially contested concept”. Some go on to argue that it is difficult to define ‘security’ in any ‘objective’ way and that any problem can become a security issue once it has been “securitised” by policymakers. However, this does not deter us from exploring the contours of the concept of ‘security’ so as to contextualise the core term of the study—‘security dynamics’—in the South Asian context.

In the traditional sense, ‘security’ is understood in military-strategic terms with its exclusive focus on the state and its interests in political and territorial self-preservation. According to Walter Lipmann, “a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid war and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war.” In a conflictual sense, Ian Bellamy defines security as, “a relative freedom from war, coupled with a relatively high expectation that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that should occur.” This traditional notion of security has two distinct characteristics:

1. The state is considered principal provider of security against both conventional and non-conventional threats. States, irrespective of whether they are democratic or authoritarian, give priority to their own security. They do not bother, in the process, if the security of their subjects is compromised. The defining maxim is: “no security outside the state; no state without security.”
2. Understanding force postures and capabilities of states is a key tenet of traditional security. In short, security traditionally is understood within the framework of ‘realist’ paradigm. Scholars like Stephen Walt go to the extent of rejecting the inclusion of “non-military” components like “pollution, disease, child abuse, or economic recessions” into security studies, as that would “destroy its intellectual coherence”. Thus, traditionalists argue that military force is the primary threat, and other issues, such as the migration, drugs, environment and poverty, should only be considered as potential secondary causes of insecurity. In this sense, ‘security-insecurity’ is defined “in relation to vulnerabilities—both internal and external—that threaten or have the

potential to bring down or weaken state structures, both territorial and institutional, and governing regimes.”

However, when one looks at the situation in the developing countries, the need for a broader notion of security is uncontested. “Nonmilitary” issues like scarcity, unemployment, displacement, migration, underdevelopment, insurgency, drug-trafficking, small arms proliferation, food and water scarcity and communal and ethnic violence are at the heart of insecurity of the developing countries. These ‘nonmilitary’ issues are so strong in some countries that they don’t allow the creation of required military strength. Besides, without these problems, the emerging nations would be in a better position to focus on development. As Caroline Thomas puts it, “security in the context of the Third World does not simply refer to the military dimension, as is often assumed in the Western discussions of the concept, but to the whole range of dimensions of a state’s existence which has been taken care of in the more developed states, especially those in the West.” As Raimo Vayrynen rightly observes, “In developing countries, the notion of national security cannot be separated from the non-military threats to security.” This is mainly because the developing world is characterised by “their colonial background, the arbitrary construction of their boundaries by external powers, the lack of societal cohesion, their recent emergence into juridical statehood, and their stage of development.”

This has given birth to a new concept of ‘Comprehensive Security’ involving, apart from the already existing state aspect, human, economic and environmental dimensions. The concept gained definite momentum in the post-Cold War era mainly due to reasons like decrease in the possibility of inter-state wars and increase in intra-state conflicts especially in the developing world. The UNDP report of 1994 aptly observes that “the concept of security has far too long been interpreted narrowly.... Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards.”

‘Security’, thus, is understood in broad terms incorporating ‘liberal’ and ‘constructivists’ paradigms. The distinct character of ‘comprehensive security’ is that state is no more the central unit or focus of analyses. On the other hand, in the developing world (like the countries of South Asia), the state itself is seen as “far from being the provider of security as in the conventional view, and has in many ways been a primary source of insecurity....” Mohammad Ayoob argued on similar lines when he observed that the state in the Third World, in the process of consolidating itself, pitted against its own people. According to him, “Security-insecurity is defined in relation to vulnerabilities – both internal and external – that threaten or have the potential to bring down or weaken state structure, both territorial and institutional and governing regimes.”

From the perspective of this unit, ‘comprehensive security’ gains importance because of two main reasons:

1. Traditional state boundaries have become less relevant in defence against threats military or non-military.

2. People have become first-line of direct victims of any threats.

Also, non-traditional threats and non-state actors have become key factors in contemporary security debate. To put it in layman's terms, "Security, in any objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values; in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked."

It is with this conceptual understanding of the term 'security' that this Unit attempts to look at various aspects of South Asian security dynamics.

15.3 CONTEXTUALIZING SOUTH ASIA

To have a clear understanding of South Asia's security dynamics, it is vital to comprehend the region at least in four contexts: geo-strategic, political, economic and socio-cultural.

15.3.1 Geo-strategic Context: Of the five regions of the Asian continent (West Asia, South Asia, East Asia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia), South Asia's strategic location is significant. It is one of the most densely populated regions of the world with around one-fourth of the global population packed in just 3.5 percent of the land area. The region comprises of eight countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – and two seas (Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal) and an ocean (Indian Ocean). Like in the international system, small states constitute majority in terms of numbers in South Asia. The region is populous, but also one of the poorest. Despite similar cultural attributes, the region is least integrated. India is indisputably the regional power that makes the region 'India-dominant' in every sphere: territory, population, economic strength, military might, nuclear power, technology and so on. Pakistan, because of its nuclear and military power is not considered a small state, though weaker in all other aspects. But for these two states, all other states are 'small' taking into consideration parameters in the following table:

Countries of South Asia – Various Parameters

Country	Land Area (SqKms)	Population (in thousands)	GDP (in billions)	Armed Forces Personnel	Trade Volume (Bn USD)
Afghanistan	652,860.0	38,041.75	19.291	272,900	16.5
Bangladesh	130,170.0	163,046.16	302.571	227,050	80.4
Bhutan	38,140.0	763.09	2.531	6,000	1.6
India	2,973,190.0	1,366,417.75	2869.000	3,026,500	940.0
Maldives	300.0	530.95	5.642	5,000	3.1
Nepal	143,350.0	28,608.71	30.641	111,600	10.7
Pakistan	770,880.0	216,565.32	278.222	944,800	83.7
Sri Lanka	61,864.0	21,803.00	84.009	317,000	33.0

Source: World Bank, 2020

In terms of land area, India's size is more than all other countries of the region put together. India is nearly three times populous and economically strong (in GDP terms) than the combined strength of all other countries of South Asia. In trade volume, the gap is huge between India and its

South Asian colleagues. In terms of military strength, India has more than one-third of combined military personnel of all other countries of the region. As a result, India's predominance has generated: "legitimate and understandable, although often exaggerated apprehensions among India's neighbours vis-à-vis New Delhi. It makes the former feel insecure and uncomfortable in the company of such a giant neighbour." In security terms, while India considers its neighbourhood as integral part of its security, its neighbours perceive India as a primary threat. This is the principal dilemma of the region. The security dilemma persists despite India adopting "a soft power approach based on a series of new initiatives framed around concepts of 'non-reciprocity', 'connectivity' and 'asymmetrical responsibilities', which indicate a willingness to use economic attractiveness to persuade its neighbours rather than the use of coercive military capabilities."

Situated in between energy-rich West Asia and energy-demanding East Asia, South Asia is an important connecting port. Hence China has given utmost importance to the region in its BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) and has been working to seek connectivity to the Indian Ocean through both Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.

15.3.2 Political Context:

The countries of the region are governed by different types of governmental systems: democracy (parliamentary and presidential), constitutional monarchy, authoritarian and even a religious emirate. India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal have adopted parliamentary form; Sri Lanka and Maldives have presidential form; Bhutan is a constitutional monarchy; and Afghanistan has recently declared itself as Emirate under Taliban.

The region has come a long way in gaining its political maturity. Pakistan has been witnessing civilian governments completing full terms without military coups. Bangladesh is now politically stable than ever before. Indian federal governments are steady, although witnessing considerable influence from regional parties. Nepal got a republican constitution and is fairly stable. Sri Lanka, though displays democratic authoritarianism on-and-off, has got a firm grip over secessionist forces. Maldives has creditably been enjoying democracy, although afflicted by political bickering among the political parties. Bhutan has been the most stable country in the region advertising the concept of 'Gross National Happiness' as against 'Gross National Product'. Afghanistan has been facing turmoil for over three decades now with on and off Taliban regime and external interventions. Yet, when it comes to the quality of governance, the governments can do much better than what they do now.

15.3.3 Economic Context:

South Asia is a developing region with GDP per capita of around USD 1,800 in 2021 compared to the world average of USD 10,000. The pandemic has further affected the economic growth. Poverty is rising sharply and existing inequalities are widening. Due to high population density, there is a significant strain on the resources that are already scarce. At the same time, the region has good potential of demographic dividend in various forms like huge consumer market, good supply of cheap labor (both technical and non-technical), and abundant human resources in various fields. However, the

countries of the region continue to grapple with how to reap benefits from this advantage. Yet another major concern is lack of economic integration within the region.

Two-thirds of the region's economy is with India; all of its neighbours have trade deficit with India. But ironically, despite the trade volume that is on the increasing trend, India's trade with the countries of the region is not above four percent of its global trade. Some of the main reasons for poor intra-regional trade are poor connectivity, high para- and non-tariff barriers despite existence of regional trading arrangements, persistent informal trade and significant costs in logistics. Most importantly, there is less comparative advantage in goods for trade among the countries. China making inroads in the region as the largest trading partner of most of the countries (including India) has added to the woes. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has further intensified its incursion.

The region overall depends on the external supply for its energy needs and is vulnerable to global developments. At the same time, the region is one of the largest recipients of foreign exchange due to outward economic migration. The region is highly vulnerable to natural disasters like floods, droughts, landslides, cyclones, tsunami in addition to those new disasters related to global warming. The region has skewed presence in the services sector, especially the business process outsourcing (BPO). Though the countries of the region have been vying to bolster manufacturing. Human Development Index (HDI) scoring is low for the region. It must be pointed out that the region has a huge potential for economic growth if the existing politico-security issues are sorted out.

15.3.4 Socio-cultural Context:

The fact that South Asia is home to many cultural traditions, the region is generally referred to as "a microcosm of a multicultural world". The region, in fact, is more cultural than a geo-political construct. Belonging to various ethnic groups, people of the region converse in over 1000 languages and follow different religious denominations. Hierarchical social structures like caste system prevail in most countries of the region. The culture of the region is manifested in literature, music, cinema, dance, art, drama, paintings, architecture, and food as a binder and is transborder in nature. Culture transcends borders and hence the level of people-to-people contacts have been good, if not at its best. However, inter-state tensions are a big spoiler to this tremendous reservoir of goodwill. Literacy level of the region, though better and improving, is not up-to-the-mark.

15.4 SECURITY DYNAMICS OF SOUTH ASIA

Security dynamics of South Asia has to be understood in two dimensions: traditional and non-traditional.

15.4.1 Traditional Security Dynamics

Otherwise known as 'conventional security threats', traditional security threats are those that threaten the state: its territorial integrity, sovereignty and population by means of military force and armaments, war, alliances and balance of power. The military force is trained and professional; the

armaments used are either conventional or nuclear or both; military alliances and balance of power are aimed at increasing the deterrence value.

Conventional Conflicts: As far as the South Asian region is concerned, conventional/traditional security threats are abounding. Two major countries in the region – India and Pakistan – fought four wars since their independence: 1947-48, 1965, 1971 and 1999. Of these four wars, three were fought in and over Jammu and Kashmir (1947-48, 1965, 1999). And the 1971 war was pertaining to liberation of Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan. All these four wars cost around 25,000 military deaths on both sides combined. Apart from these conventional conflicts, both India and Pakistan continue to have stand-off at the borders (including at Siachen Glacier), drawing significant chunk of military resources.

Similar trend is conspicuous between India and China. Both countries fought a war in 1962 in the Eastern Sector despite agreeing on a promising Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and a famous friendship slogan “*Hindi-Chinibhai-bhai*”. Dispute over the boundary and Tibet issue seem to have caused the 1962 confrontation resulting in over 2000 military deaths on both sides. From then on, on-and-off standoff between the countries on the line of actual control (LAC) continues despite several talks at political, military and diplomatic levels. The worst ever violent clashes after 1962 between the two forces erupted in June 2020 in Galwan Valley (Western Sector) causing about 30 fatalities.

This conventional threat matrix has reflected in the kind of military force level that the countries of the region have been maintaining. The strength of armed forces personnel of all the countries of the region put together is around five million. Of this, India’s share is around three-fifths (including the reserves).

South Asian Countries: Military Strength & Budget

Country	Military Personnel (including reserves)	Annual Defence Budget (in million USD)	Military expenditure (% of GDP)
Afghanistan	272,900	279.5	1.4
Bangladesh	227,050	4,558	1.3
Bhutan	6,000	NA	NA
India	3,026,500	72,887	2.9
Maldives	5,000	0.687	NA
Nepal	111,600	424	1.4
Pakistan	944,800	10,376	4.0
Sri Lanka	317,000	1,573	1.9
South Asia	4,899,850	90,099	2.8

Source: World Bank, 2020

According to Global Firepower Ranking 2021, the Indian military is considered fourth strongest in the world next only to China, US, Russia. Yet, India has not indulged in any unilateral force projection or domination with any of its neighbours. And India has no record of military invasion

and territorial aggression/occupation. At the same time, the India has not hesitated to render military assistance as and when requested by its neighbours when in trouble. The classic cases of military assistance include: Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal. India also helps the armed forces of its neighbours in training. India is also one of the largest contributors to the UN Peacekeeping Force. Interestingly, South Asian countries have been contributing troops to the UN peacekeeping in a substantial manner.

Nuclear Dimension: The conventional conflicts are now complicated by nuclearization of the region. China became nuclear in 1964, India in 1974 and Pakistan in 1998. All three countries have more than 100 nuclear war heads each and corresponding missile delivery systems. Although none of the three countries have so far used nuclear weapons in their bilateral conflicts, there is a fear of their usage anytime in the future. In other words, the present 'strategic restraint' may not hold for long. However, the fear of use of nuclear weapons could be from Pakistan's side, at both strategic and tactical levels. Islamabad, apart from recognizing the role of nuclear weapons for its minimum credible deterrence, outrightly rejected 'no first use' policy. On the other hand, India has diligently been following 'No First Use' nuclear weapons policy – a commitment to use nuclear weapons only in retaliation to a nuclear attack and not in response to conventional weapons' usage. China also has a declared 'No First Use' policy on nuclear attacks. Yet, of late, there are suggestions that Beijing is contemplating to reconsider this long-held position due to "counter US military presence in the region". India has also been pondering on similar lines to revisit the no first use policy due to change in the dynamics of the 'two-front' nuclear threat. Notably, overt nuclear capability of Pakistan has increased its confidence to pursue sub-conventional warfare strategy against India. There is also a danger of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of violent non-state actors that are operating with utmost legitimacy and influence in Pakistan. So, there is a nuclear dimension to Indo-Pak sub-conventional conflicts.

Interestingly, there is a close security cooperation between Pakistan and China keeping India as a common threat factor. This has put India in a 'triangulated security dilemmatic position': one impinging on the other.

15.4.2 Non-traditional Security Dynamics

Non-traditional security threats are those that threaten the basic survival or well-being of the individual citizens of a country. According to Mahbub-ulHaq, security is not just about territory or nation but security of people in their jobs, homes, and communities. Going by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "... for too many people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from dread of a cataclysmic world event." For MellyCaballero, non-traditional security threats are: "Challenges to the survival and wellbeing of peoples and states that arise primarily out of non-military sources, such as climate change, cross-border environmental degradation and resource depletion, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking, and other forms of transnational crime." These threats have no territorial restrictions and hence may arise from domestic or

from beyond boundaries. Terrorism, transnational organised crimes, illegal migration, environmental security, and energy security are the five broad strands of non-traditional security. South Asia faces all these types of non-traditional threats to security.

Terrorism: The region ranks second (next only to West Asia) in the number of attacks and deaths due to terrorism. Almost all countries of the region have faced some kind of terrorism related violence. The region has faced immense human and economic loss as a result. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan figure high in terms of number of attacks and casualties. The region also faces the traditional 'terrorists vs. freedom fighters dilemma'. Some of the groups considered as "terror" groups in one country are called as "freedom fighters" by others. Countries of the region did not hesitate to use terrorism as an 'instrument of state policy'. Terror groups of the region have cross-border linkages and also diaspora connections for their material, human and diplomatic support. These dynamics have posed serious problem in counterterrorism cooperation both at bilateral and at multi-lateral levels. The most concerning is the nexus between terrorism and organized crime. Some of the major terror groups of South Asia include: Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami-Bangladesh, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Al Badr, Tehrik-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Jabbar, Al Umar Mujahideen, Indian Mujahideen, ISIS, Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, United Jihad Council, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Sipah-e-Mohammad Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Jundullah, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and so on.

Transnational Organised Crimes: Transnational organized crimes like drug-trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking and cyber-crime are abounded in the region. The fact that South Asia lies in between the 'Golden Triangle' (Myanmar, Laos and Thailand) and 'Golden Crescent' (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran), the two major narcotic hubs of the world, makes the region a default transit route. About 80 percent of the world's opium is produced in Afghanistan. And the country is second only to Morocco in the production of cannabis. Drugs thus produced are processed and trafficked mostly through Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian countries.

Human trafficking is yet another non-traditional security threat faced by almost all the countries of the region. Open and porous borders among the countries of the region have eased trafficking by organized gangs. Significantly, one third of those trafficked are children. The victims of human trafficking are found in about 40 countries around the world, especially in West Asia. Sexual exploitation and forced labour seem to be the main drivers. Ironically, poverty has a direct link to human trafficking. Apart from poverty and economic inequality, gender discrimination, gender violence and social exclusion are identified as some of the causes. Hence, most of the victims are from poorer areas of countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The trafficking operation is so sophisticated that "human trafficking enclaves" are present at certain border areas of India as collection and recruitment centres.

Small arms trafficking in South Asia is alarming. Afghanistan and Pakistan especially are known for having highest concentration of small weapons in

the world. The spillover of this concentration is felt across and beyond the region. Prominent conflicts in the region – Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, Northeast India, Central India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal – have propelled the need for small arms to significant proportions. Arms are also trafficked from China and Southeast Asia via Myanmar and Bangladesh. Both maritime and land routes are used for the purpose. Interestingly, there is a symbiotic linkage between narcotics smugglers and arms traffickers.

Cyber warfare has turned out to be one of the serious threats to the region. It, in fact, has been considered as one of the foremost among the “next generation of threats”. Statistically, India has always been among the top five targets of malicious activity on the internet that range from virus, trojan, malware, identity theft, hacking, cyber stalking, cybersquatting, spamming, email-bombing, email-spoofing, cyber defamation, web defacement, data diddling, web jacking, denial of service attack, key logging and internet time theft. The cyber threats that the countries of the region face come from both state and non-state actors: individual criminal hackers to organised criminal groups, from terrorist networks to advanced nation states. Attacks on Indian cyberspace have increased manifold in the recent past; and they have increased in sophistication and anonymity. There is a method behind the madness. Given the exponential growth of our IT networks and our increasing reliance on these networks, future attacks could be more dangerous. Five sectors especially are at most risk: banking, transport, telecommunication, power and sensitive information with the government. Taking advantage of the anonymous nature of the Internet, terrorists use cyberspace for communications, geographic mapping, recruitment, fund raising and, most importantly, intelligence gathering.

Illegal Migration: South Asia offers itself as a classic case of “south-south migration”. According to Myron Weiner, population movement in the region since its decolonization in 1947 consisted largely of “rejected peoples” or “unwanted migrants”. “Rejected peoples” he meant are refugees who flee from their home country due to persecution; and “unwanted migrants” are largely illegal migrants. India has been the largest recipient of both these categories of population from other countries of the region and beyond. Apart from India, some of the countries that have been hosting “rejected peoples” or “unwanted migrants” include Pakistan (from Afghanistan), Nepal (from Bhutan and vice versa), Bangladesh from Myanmar, and to an extent Sri Lanka (from Maldives). But India is worst affected of all hosting around 30 million non-citizens. Influx of migrants have resulted in demographic imbalance in regions like northeast and resultant conflicts in the form of separatism, insurgency and terrorism.

Environmental Security: South Asia is one of the major eco-sensitive zones. Reducing forest cover, rapid melting of Himalayan glaciers and changing weather patterns triggering unseasonal rains and droughts have become a common phenomenon. Environmental security cannot be ignored because of its deep connection with conflicts and impact on human security. As the World Commission on Environment and Development rightly points out, “Environmental stress can be an important part of the web of causality associated with any conflict and can in some cases be catalytic.”

Water, especially, could be a cause for tensions between the upper and lower riparian states of the region: India vs. Pakistan; Nepal vs. India; India vs. Bangladesh and even China vs. India. Climate change, *inter alia*, has induced numerous environmental refugees in South Asia and is expected to do so with more intensity in the coming years. The most affected country is Bangladesh. If the present trend of sea level rise continues, Maldives may be submerged by the end of 21st century.

Energy Security: Energy security is understood as a constant availability of energy sources without any interruption and at affordable price. In that sense, South Asia is facing acute energy crisis that stems from three fundamental issues: (1) Rising population and developmental aspirations of all countries of the region; (2) lack of access to clean and sustainable energy supplies; and (3) external dependence for energy supplies despite huge hydro-energy potential and large reserve of coal. This trend is going to increase further in the coming years. The external dependency of hydrocarbon energy supply is risky due to volatility of regions like West Asia and fluctuating oil prices. As a result of insufficient energy security, the region's economic growth is stunted.

15.5 RESPONSE TO SECURITY DYNAMICS BY SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES:

In response to two types of threats outlined above, countries of the region have taken wide-ranging measures both at bilateral and multilateral levels. Yet, in terms of priority, the governments seem to have focused more on addressing traditional security issues rather than the non-traditional ones.

Layers of complexities are added by the presence of numerous factors like: perception of India's "big brother attitude", India-Pakistan rivalry, territorial and resource disputes, colonial hangovers, role of extra-regional players like China, nuclearization, economic underdevelopment, non-traditional security threats, absence of cohesive regional grouping and so on. Presence of regional organisation like SAARC did not make much difference, but only institutionalised the security dilemma. Like all small states, South Asian counterparts share two primary concerns: security and economic development. But the question is: to address these primary concerns, especially security, they have been resorting to one or combination of five major strategies – 'balancing', 'bandwagoning', 'neutrality', 'hedging' or even 'go alone'.

All smaller states including Pakistan are anxious to enhance their security through extra-regional options. But, except Pakistan, none of the South Asian small states have considered joining any military alliance or resorted to nuclearization. Some are smart enough to adopt bandwagoning with India in the beginning and later pursued external balancing strategy, although in a subtle manner. Some states did adopt 'internal balancing' to strengthen their military capacity with the help of extra regional powers. While all South Asian small states did adopt 'hedging' strategy, none of them resorted to 'go alone'.

Interestingly, strategy of 'regionalism' and 'neutrality' in various shades have been advocated by almost all small states of South Asia. Even in any of

the South Asia-based organisation, to avoid Indian domination, they do not hesitate to bring in extra regional powers as full members or observers. For instance, China's inclusion as SAARC+1 similar to ASEAN+1 is favoured by some of the states like Pakistan much to the discomfort of India. In the economic domain, some scholars argue that small states of the region "have engaged in complex bargaining to gain economic assistance from key states in the region, China and India in particular."

Notably, one could see a link between democratisation and anti-India feeling in the neighbourhood. Political forces are clearly demarcated on "pro" and "anti- India" lines. India has become a punching bag in the neighbourhood to rally their citizens. Political parties or even certain monarchs and dictators in the neighbourhood do not mind using anti-India sentiments to win popular votes or to divert attention from pressing domestic issues.

Conscious of neighbours' perception of "big brother", India has been considerate in reaching out to its small neighbours on the principles of "equality and mutual benefit". While "equality" is appreciated, "mutuality" is perceived by the neighbours as a factor working to the advantage of India. Some quarters in the neighbourhood feel that India is ruthless in managing anti-India sentiments. During the Cold War, India's dealing with the neighbourhood was guided by Nehru and Indira doctrines. Gujral Doctrine brought in the principle of "non-reciprocity". Presently Modi Doctrine, has 'Neighbourhood First' as a dictum. The fact that personnel rapport among the leaders is an important component of threat perception and strategies adopted, India could reach out to leaders and people of small states in a more conscious manner. While China has economic advantage, India has the advantage of geographic proximity, cultural and historical ties. This should be exploited.

Countries of South Asia have to work together to meet the security challenges effectively. SAARC is the single regional organization that envelops all countries of the region in their cooperation in various areas, including in addressing non-traditional security issues. Agreement on Establishing the SAARC Food Security Reserve (1987), SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (1987), SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1990), SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2002), SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (2004), Agreement on Establishing the SAARC Food Bank (2007), SAARC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (2008), SAARC Convention on Cooperation on Environment (2010). But unfortunately, stuck in myriad issues and bottlenecks among some of its members, SAARC is struggling even to conduct its regular summit meetings. Consequently, the South Asian grouping's key member, India, has been trying to shift its focus towards Southeast Asia, and towards sub-regional groupings, so as not to get stalled by SAARC's switch-on and switch-off mode, as dictated by Pakistan. In this regard, of late, India has started giving much importance to cooperative arrangements like Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), BIMSTEC, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), and East Asia Summit (EAS). BIMSTEC aspires to do: "The regional group constitutes a bridge between South and South East

Asia and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries.” Not only being a bridge between two regions (South Asia and Southeast Asia), BIMSTEC also has set-up a platform for cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members. Significantly, BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization unlike various other regional groups. So far, 14 sectors have been identified: trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism, fisheries, agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact, and climate change.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit

1) Outline the concept of security and how do you categorise them?

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2) Contextualise South Asia as a region.

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Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit

1) Briefly sketch various security threats faced by South Asia in both conventional and non-conventional domains.

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2) In response to the threats confronted, what are the various steps taken by the countries?

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LET US SUM UP

The concept of security is traditionally understood in the ‘realist’ framework with the guiding maxim: “no security outside the state; no state without security.” However, after the Cold War, the concept of security has widened

with the rise of violent non-state actors as the main threat bearers and with emergence of certain “nonmilitary” issues like scarcity, unemployment, displacement, migration, underdevelopment, insurgency, drug-trafficking, small arms proliferation, cybercrime and the like. Security is now seen in a comprehensive sense to include human, economic, energy and environmental dimensions.

Seen in every context – geo-strategic, political, economic and socio-cultural – South Asia is one of the most volatile and insecure regions. It faces a multitude of traditional and non-traditional security challenges that complement and reinforce each other. Inter-state conflicts between India and Pakistan and India and China dominate traditional security threats in the region. Possession of nuclear weapons by all these three countries has increased the threat level. The countries of South Asia face five types of non-traditional threats to their security viz., terrorism, transnational organised crimes, illegal migration, environmental degradation, and energy deficit. All these challenges continue to intensify the vulnerability of the countries of the region and have made the region most volatile. In response, the countries of the region have resorted to various unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures to secure themselves.

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE

Check Your Progress 1

Although the concept of 'security' is contested and is still evolving, it is broadly understood as absence of threats to acquired values and absence of fear that such values will be attacked. Threats to security can be broadly categorized in two forms: traditional and non-traditional. While traditional security threats are those that threaten the states and their core values, non-traditional security threats are those that threaten the basic survival or well-being of the individual citizens of a country

- 2) The South Asian region can be better comprehended in four broad contexts: geo-strategic, political, economic and socio-cultural. Geo-strategically, South Asia is significant straddling in both continental and maritime domains. Politically, the region is still settling down witnessing various governmental forms. Economically, the region is one of the poorest in the world, but most populous. Socio-culturally, South Asia is the most diverse.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) On the conventional (traditional) front, the countries of the region face two kinds of threats. One is due to inter-state conflicts and the other is because of the presence of nuclear weapons. In the non-conventional (non-traditional) domain, South Asia confronts threats from terrorism, transnational organised crimes, illegal migration, environmental degradation, and energy deficit. All these threats are inter-related and impact on the overall development of the region.
- 2) In response to the threats confronted, the countries of the region have taken various steps at three levels: unilateral, bilateral and multilateral. Unilaterally, several policies (including legal frameworks) and force structures are in place. Bilateral and multilateral agreements and cooperative mechanisms are being worked out to ward off both traditional and non-traditional security threats. At the regional level, SAARC may not seem effective, but certain sub-regional groupings like BBIN and trans-regional organisations like BIMSTEC have come to the fore to sustain the momentum of regional cooperation in South Asia.

- i US Environment Protection Agency, at http://water.epa.gov/learn/kids/drinkingwater/water_trivia_facts.cfm
- ii McKinsey Report, 'Charting our Water Future', at http://www.mckinsey.com/App_Media/Reports/Water/Charting_Our_Water_Future_Exec%20Summary_001.pdf
- iii Jay Walljasper, at <http://otherworldsarepossible.org/claiming-protecting-water>. Cited in *Blues Beyond Boundaries: Transboundary Water Commons*, ActionAid Report, Bhubaneswar: Natural Resource Knowledge Activist Hub, 2015, p.1.
- iv Maude Barlow, 'Water as a Commons: Only Fundamental Change Can Save Us', *The Wealth of the Commons; A World beyond Market & State*, Levellers Press, 2012.
- v <http://www.unwater.org/water-cooperation-2013/water-cooperation/facts-and-figures/en/>
- vi National Geographic, May 8, 2019
- vii 'Free-flowing Rivers: Economic Luxury or Ecological Necessity?', WWF Report, 2006.
- viii Ibid., at <http://www.eflownet.org/viewinfo.cfm?linkcategoryid=4&linkid=64&siteid=1&FuseAction=display>
- ix Stanford, J. A. and Ward, J. V., 'An Ecosystem Perspective of Alluvial Rivers: Connectivity and the Hyporheic Corridor', *Journal of the North American Benthological Society*, 12, 1993, pp. 48–60.
- x Ramaswamy Iyer, 'The Notion of Environmental Flows: A Caution', NIE/IWMI Workshop on Environmental Flows, New Delhi, 23–24 March 2005.
- xi 'Freshwater Under Threat: South Asia', UNEP Report, 2008
- xii INCCA Report, 'Climate Change and India: A 4X4 Assessment', Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change, Government of India, November 2010, p.119–120. See, <http://moef.nic.in/downloads/public-information/fin-rpt-incca.pdf>
- xiii James Der Derian, 'The Value of Security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and Boudrillard', in David Campbell and Michael Dillon (eds.) *The Political Subject of Violence*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991, p. 97.
- xiv Aaron Wolf, 'Conflict and Cooperation along International Waterways', *Water Policy*, 1(2), 1998, pp. 252–65; Sandra Postel and Aaron Wolf. 'Dehydrating Conflict', *Foreign Policy*, September/October 2001, pp. 60–67. Wolf coordinates the Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database, Oregon University, which includes a computer database of over 400 water-related treaties, negotiating notes and background material on 14 case-studies of conflict resolution, news files on cases of acute water-related conflict, and assessments of indigenous/traditional methods of water conflict resolution.
- xv Aaron Wolf 'Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database', at [http:// www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/](http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/)
- xvi Peter Gleick, 'Water and Conflict: Fresh Water Resources and International Security,' *International Studies*, 1, 1993, p. 92. See also 'Water, War and Peace in Middle East', *Environment*, 36, 1994. Gleick heads the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security, Oakland, California, at <http://www.pacinst.org/>
- xvii Ministry of Jal Shakti, <http://jalshakti-dowr.gov.in/international-cooperation/bilateral-cooperation-with-neighbouring-countries/indo-bangladesh-cooperation>
- xviii India and Pakistan are fast becoming water scarce-- in case of India, the per capita water availability has gone down from 1861 cubic metres in 2001 to 1545 cubic metres in 2011 (according to figures released by Ministry of Water Resources, Government of India on 27 April 2017, available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=119797>) while in Pakistan the per capita water availability has reduced from 5300 cubic meters in 1947 to about 1000 cubic metres in 2016

(according to figures cited in “Water Scarcity in Pakistan – A Myth or a Reality?”, Executive Development Institute(EDI), National School of Public Policy, 25 – 29 September, 2017, at [www.nspp.gov.pk/RATIONALE%20%20\(1\).docx](http://www.nspp.gov.pk/RATIONALE%20%20(1).docx)). The figures are likely to come down further and reach well below one thousand and seven hundred cubic metres per person by 2025 for India and Pakistan respectively.

- xix Uttam Kumar Sinha, *Indus Basin Uninterrupted: A History of Territory and Politics from Alexander to Nehru*, Penguin Random House, New Delhi, 2021. For a comprehensive understanding of the World Bank role and the debate over the Indus Treaty see, Part V, “Making of the Indus Waters Treaty”, pp. 215-278.
- xx See the text of the Indus Waters Treaty. <https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/6439/Indus>
- xxi Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. See, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%201155/volume-1155-I-18232-English.pdf>
- xxii Gyspa Dam project was originally conceived as a 170 MW, run-of- river hydro power project under the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board (HPSEB). But in August 2008, the government declared it a ‘National Water Resource’ project and modified it from a mere hydro-electric project to a water storage project with capacity for hydro-electric generation.
- xxiii Ministry of Jal Shakti, <http://jalshakti-dowr.gov.in/international-cooperation/bilateral-cooperation-with-neighbouring-countries/indo-bangladesh-cooperation>
- xxiv Text of the Ganga Treaty. <http://jalshakti-dowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Indo%20Bangladesh%20Ganga%20Water%20TREATY-1996.pdf>

The author is currently the Head, Non Traditional Security Centre, ManoharParrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi and Managing Editor of Strategic Analysis published by Routledge.

THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY