

Impact of Indo-Pak Relations on SAARC Summits

Ravinder Singh¹, Dr. Jagpal Singh²

¹Ph. D. Research Scholar, Department of Political Science Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo

²Professor, Department of Political Science, Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo

ABSTRACT

The Two-nation theory created such a crack in the mutual Hindu-Muslim unity of one thousand years that could not be filled up even after India and Pakistan became two countries in 1947. India's relations with Pakistan have been particularly unhappy. The main issue of Kashmir in India and Pakistan is still burning. SAARC is a major platform with all regional organizations established to solve regional problems in the world. Because of its wars and tensions between India and Pakistan, this institution did not fulfil the objectives for which it was established. Due to the disputes between both the countries the Summits of the SAARC have been cancelled or postponed many times, even the summits that were held could not succeed completely. In this paper, the impact of the conflicts between India and Pakistan on the SAARC summits (1985-2018) will be discussed.

Keywords: Indo-Pak conflicts, Kashmir Problem, Regional Organization, SAARC, SAARC Summits,

1. INTRODUCTION

Finally, in 1947, two separate countries were established in India and Pakistan. Back to the establishment of these two countries, where the concept of Two Nation Theory is concerned, the ambition of political leaders is somewhere else. These people were formed because of religion, race, culture, traditions, etc. of people of both the countries. Both the countries of India and Pakistan had to give a positive atmosphere to the people of Hindu and Muslim people to develop them. But the issue of religious intolerance played a key role in creating and spreading communal feelings in both countries, whose damages are being lauded by the people of both countries.

Kashmir is the focal point of the conflict between India and Pakistan. Both the countries could not develop either because of this and neither could they try to improve the institution of SAARC set up in 1985 by the President of Bangladesh. With the adequate solution of the Kashmir issue, Indo-Pak will be able to increase their chances of shared partnership. The main reason for SAARC failure is terrorism. If Pakistan stops terrorist activity in its field by adopting a positive approach, it will be able to strengthen the bonds of shared harmony and relationships between the two countries, which is the main requirement of the time for SAARC's success.

A lot of research work has been done on the Indo-Pak conflicts and on the reasons for failure of SAARC. The researcher has given so many suggestions for the improvement of SAARC. Many have discussed

about the negative impact of Indo-Pak relations on the development of South Asian countries. India & Pakistan are the major countries of SAARC as the other countries are very small & undeveloped. But the continuous unhealthy relations between these two countries are the big hurdle for the success of SAARC. The Impact of the unhappy relations between these two countries has been seen on the SAARC summits also, that has been postponed or cancelled many time. In this paper an effort has been made to see the effect of the conflicts between India & Pakistan on the SAARC Summits (1985-2018).

The paper is divided into five sections, section I is on Introduction, in section II the main conflicts between India & Pakistan will be discussed in brief. Section III discusses the various SAARC Summits held and the reasons behind the postponement and their cancellation. An Analytical study of SAARC Summits will be presented in section IV. Conclusion & Future prospectus of the study will be given in Section V.

2 .INDO-PAK CONFLICTS

Our relations with Pakistan have been particularly unhappy. There have been constant threats of war. Since August 1947 when Partition led to the creation of these two independent countries, disputes, in particular with regard to the claim over Kashmir, have been a consistent feature of the relationship between India and Pakistan. On several occasions the conflict over Kashmir gave way to military attacks. The only other time when Kashmir was not the main issue causing an armed struggle was during the Bangladesh liberation war of 1971[1,2].

3. SAARC SUMMITS: POSTPONEMENT AND CANCELLATION

Summits which are the highest authority in SAARC, were supposed to be held annually. The Country hosting the Summit also holds the Chair of the Association. The supreme authority of SAARC lies with heads of state or government who, according to the Charter as signed on December 8, 1985, should meet once a year or more often as and when considered necessary by the Member States. Council of Ministers is the second highest and main decision-making body of SAARC. Besides other responsibilities, Council of Ministers reviews in its Inter-Summit Sessions (ISS) progress on Summit decisions and finalizes its agenda, dates and venue. Summits are supposed to be held on rotational basis based on the alphabetic order of all member states (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). Each Summit ends with a declaration that also includes the announcement of the venue and schedule of the next Summit. The participation of every member is mandatory for convening the Summit [1].

The first Summit was held on Dec 7th-8th 1985, when SAARC was launched officially. Since then, only 18 Summits have been held, i.e. ten in the first 15 years (1986 – 2000) and eight in next 17 years (2001 – 2018). Only five Summits Out of the 18 Summits, held on previously decided dates and venues. The date and of others 13 changed or reshuffled due to various reasons [2]. Since the SAARC Charter does not provide for

compensating a delayed Summit, delay of a moot for even a few weeks or months disturbs the entire calendar and affects the schedule of every subsequent meeting, as reflected in Table 1:

Table-1(SAARC SUMMITS)

SAARC Calendar Summits	Scheduled/Expected Dates* and Venue	Actual Date and Venue	Agenda	Outcome
First	Dec. 1985, Dhaka	Dec. 7–8, 1985, Dhaka	South Asian states should join together to form a tighter union	Representative of the member states signed its charter.
Second	Nov. 16–17, 1986	Nov. 16–17, 1986, Bangalore	New ideas for expanding cooperative plans under the SAARC	New ideas and plans were discussed but no definite progress.
Third	1987, Thimphu	Nov. 2–4, 1987, Kathmandu	Normal procedure	Regional Convention on the elimination of Terrorism and an arrangement to launch a South Asian Food Reserve
Fourth	1988, Colombo	Dec. 29–31, 1988, Islamabad	Optimistic assessment of trends and development in region	Both Pakistan and India showed positive behavior towards each other.
Fifth	1989, Colombo	Nov. 21–23, 1990, Malé	Usual process	Convention Drugs, Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances, agreement on exchange of information with ASEAN and EU.
Sixth	Nov. 7–9, 1991, Colombo	Dec. 21, 1991, Colombo	Usual Business of the group	No major progress
Seventh	Dec. 1992, Dhaka	Apr. 10–11, 1993, Dhaka	Normal Business of the body	No substantial advancement
Eighth	1994, New Delhi	May 2–4, 1995, New Delhi	Expression of gratification on the successes of the first decade of SAARC	No noteworthy development
Ninth	1996, Malé	May 12–14, 1997, Malé	Decision to resume Pak-India meetings at secretary level	The talks remained fruitless
Tenth	July 29–31,	July 29–31, 1998,	the summit went ahead	No significant move

	1998, Colombo	Colombo	through its normal business	
Eleventh	i) Nov. 1999, Kathmandu	Jan. 4–6, 2002, Kathmandu	Security and political considerations could not be overlooked in the course of regional integration	No fruitful outcome
	ii) 2000, Kathmandu			
	iii) 2001, Kathmandu			
Twelfth	Jan. 2003, Islamabad	Jan. 4 – 6, 2004, Islamabad	Economic stability	Islamabad Declaration
Thirteenth	a. Jan. 9–11, 2005, Dhaka	Nov. 12 – 13, 2005, Dhaka	Commitment to resolve territorial differences through peaceful means	Renewal of Pak-India composite dialogue
	b. Feb. 6–7, 2005, Dhaka			
Fourteenth	April 3–4, 2007, New Delhi	April 3–4, 2007, New Delhi	Commitment to realize genuine cooperation	Attempts to be made to resolve Pak-India problems.
Fifteenth	2008, Malé	August 2–3, 2008, Colombo	Deliberation on various issues of mutual importance	Australia and Myanmar were admitted as observer states.
Sixteenth	Sept. 2009, Malé	April 28–29, 2010, Thimphu	"Towards a Green and Happy South Asia"	Climate Change
Seventeenth	Nov. 10–11, 2011, Addu City	Nov. 10–11, 2011, Addu City	Cooperation should be made in three areas i.e. transport, trade, and economic integration;	Four agreements were signed 1. Rapid Response to Natural Disasters 2. Multilateral Arrangement on Recognition of Conformity Assessment 3. Implementation of Regional Standards 4. Seed Bank Agreement
Eighteenth	i) Nov.–Dec. 2012, Kathmandu	Nov. 26–27, 2014 , Kathmandu	“Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity”	“The legal permission on SAARC Satellite Scheme”
	ii) Nov.– Dec. 2013, Kathmandu			
Nineteenth	Nov. 15-16, 2016, Islamabad	New dates are yet to be announced.		

3.1 Reasons for Cancellation or Postponement of SAARC Summits

There have been various causes of continuous postponement/cancellation of SAARC Summits till date. The most significant among them are the member countries bilateral disputes; political problems ; members internal problems such as political instability, unrest, general elections and economic recessions; lack of adequate infrastructure and resources on the part of some SAARC Countries to organize the regional event; and natural calamities.

On India's insistence, South Asian Countries included Article 10 in the Charter, at the time of inception of the organization in 1985 that precludes discussion of contentious issues and bilateral problems at all SAARC meetings in order to protect the organization from being affected by them. However, the very existence of contentious issues, bilateral disputes and political problems among SAARC countries has been the most common reason for cancellations. Since, India is involved in most, if not all, of these disputes, thus, in most cases, India- Pakistan related issues were the chief causes of Summit cancellations [2, 6].

4. AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF SAARC SUMMITS

SAARC has been established to create cultural, economic, and mutual support among South Asia countries. Because of the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, SAARC could not succeed in achieving its objectives. Although there have been 18 conferences of the heads of SAARC countries so far, but there are difficulties in implementing the agreements of these Summits as relations between India and Pakistan are not smooth. Most of the conferences were cancelled due to unhealthy relationships between India and Pakistan and many have been postponed to next years from the scheduled dates, which have hurt the reputation of SAARC.

In the 8th SAARC summit, it was recommended to establish SAFTA with the aim of developing business opportunities among South Asian countries. In the next years, SAFTA was established but it could not help the South Asian countries due to Pakistan's rigid behavior. It could not succeed because Pakistan did not give the route to India and other countries for trade. It is Surprising that each year, both India and Pakistan trade about two billion US dollars business deal with America instead of trading with each other.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented a plan of SAARC Satellite for the development of South Asian countries at the 18th SAARC Summit in Nepal in 2014. He said that the satellite will be a gift for the countries of South Asia because its cost will be borne by India. Using this satellite, education, IT, Tele-medicine, besides natural discharge information can be obtained. Though the satellite was set up after spending Rs 235 crores by India, Pakistan has boycotted the plan again. Whenever there is a process of strengthening and developing mutual relations among the SAARC countries, fails due to mutual negative relations between India and Pakistan.

Apart from this, India and Pakistan have always offered mutual bilateral ties to the SAARC platform, while the SAARC Charter orders that bilateral Issues cannot be brought in SAARC Summits. By doing so, the settlement of Kashmir's problem is still there. In both the countries, violent activities are on the rise and every day the Pakistan ceasefire violations that have always been aggravating terrorism.

Pakistan Killed 18 Indian soldiers in Uri attack in 18th September 2016, which was condemned by everyone. India has refused to join the 19th SAARC Summit of Pakistan to be held in Pakistan's capital Islamabad in November, 2016 due to such an action. After India's refusal to attend the Summit, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also refused to attend the 19th SAARC Summit, due to this the SAARC summit could not held. This is a clear evidence of SAARC Failure. It is Impossible to say about the upcoming Summits. Pakistan's Foreign Policy is not positive for South Asian Countries because Pakistan remains unable to establish a friendly relationship with other countries other than India. Pakistan should improve its foreign policy and create a path of cooperation with South Asian Countries.

5. CONCLUSION & FUTURE PROSPECTS

From the above analysis, it can be estimated that the SAARC summits exist only in papers as the agreements and decisions of these summits could not be implemented properly due to unhealthy relations between India and Pakistan Several SAARC conventions were cancelled, with which the problems of the present are going on. Although these rejected summits have taken place in the coming years, but the practical benefits of these conventions could not be realized by the South Asian countries. India and Pakistan's relations should be improved for the success of SAARC. By doing so, the SAARC can climb up the stairs of Success. For the SAARC conventions, a permanent place suitable to all countries and a date should be fixed so that it can be done on time regularly.

REFERENCES

1. Dr. M.Ahmad, " Saarc Summits1985-2016: The cancellation phenomenon", *IPRI Journal* Volume No. 27, Issue, No.1, 2017, 43-71.
2. N. Yousaf, M. Ahmad, Z. Shah, " Saarc Summit And Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Analysis", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, Volume No. 54, Issue No. 2, 2017.
3. S. Kaler " Successes and Failures of Saarc" *Indian Journal Of Applied Research*, 212-213.
4. O.P. Goel (2004) "*India and SAARC Engagements*", ISHA books.
5. J.B. Das Gupta (1958), "*Indo-Pak Relations: 1947-55*", Djambatan Amesterdom.
6. H. Kumar Sinha(1994) "*India's Role in SAARC*", Rahul Publishing House, Delhi.
7. S.Upadhyay (2000), "*Pakistan and SAARC: A study of Perception, Attitude and Role*", SBW publishers, Delhi.
8. R. Malhotra (2002) , "*The Root of India- Pakistan Conflicts*", Infinity Foundation,.
9. K.R. Gupta (2003), "*India-Pakistan Relations With Special Reference to Kashmir*", Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi.
10. J. Khaan (2009) "*Partition-Birth of India and Pakistan*", Penguin Random House India Pvt. Ltd. Gurgaon, Haryana.
11. www.saarc-sec.org.