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Problems and Relevance of SAARC

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ABSTRACT

SAARC has been playing an important role in the form of regional aspiration. It is having a lot of possibilities and potential in it. But even then due to inappropriate attention and rivalry among its members, it is not able to get results according to its potential. This research paper focuses on all major aspects of SAARC which show the importance, problems and relevance of SAARC despite of all differences.

Keywords: FTA, Trade war, Debt Policy, G-20, Regional Aspiration.

I. INTRODUCTION

Although there are a lot of diversity in SAARC region on the basis of religion, caste , ethnicity and culture. But even then in December 1985 the initiative was taken by the prime minister of Bangladesh ‘Jiya- ur -Rehman’ to unite this diverse area by estimating the possibilities of this landmass. Despite of all diversities the area is having a lot of similarities as most of the countries are the part of Indian subcontinent. The organization is having the area of 5.14 million km² and the population of 1.90 billion people. Initially there were seven members in it but in 2003 Afghanistan joined it as 8th member .The main objective of this organization was to promote common social, political and economic vision for the region.

II. IMPORTANCE OF SAARC

The association is working for the growth of the region since 1984 but there are continuous conflicts between the countries for their national interest but even then there are some points on which we can show that SAARC is an important association.

- 1) SAFTA (2006) has given the benefit to its all members.
- 2) Agreement on Transportation and energy are also playing an important role for the growth of the region.
- 3) SAARC satellite (2017) has given a new direction in the area of space.
- 4) Due to dense population SAARC is having a huge working population and very high Purchasing power parity, which is helpful in the balancing of demand and supply in the region.

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- 5) SAARC university in India has also proved the importance of SAARC.

III. PROBLEMS FACED BY SAARC

Although we have seen the importance of SAARC, but even then due to some differences there are some major issues which are faced by SAARC:

- 1) Tensions between India and Pakistan relation are creating the biggest problems of trust among SAARC members.
- 2) The growing influence of China is putting impact over the region, as China is playing “**Debt Policy**” it is able to put impact among the relations of SAARC nations.
- 3) Big countries like U.S.A. are also taking interest in the area and are trying to interrupt the bilateral relations of the members, as U.S.A. also try to mediate India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir.
- 4) Small countries of SAARC take India in the responsibility of “Big Brother” and they keep a suspected eye on every step of India.
- 5) SAARC members are giving less importance to the association. For example India is giving importance to BIMSTEC over SAARC; Sri Lanka is taking help from China instead of SAARC members.
- 6) Bi-lateral issues are also responsible for the less development of the region. ie: refugees tensions between India and Bangladesh, Kalapani water dispute between India and Nepal, Opium related issue between Afghanistan and other countries of SAARC and water disputes between the countries are also creating a hurdle in the development of the region.

IV. POSSIBILITIES IN SAARC OR WAY FORWARD

Although we have seen a lot of problems which are faced by SAARC members, but even then we can't say that SAARC has lost its relevance. There are a lot of possibilities in the region which can be defined as following:

- 1) As we are able to see that powerful countries are having conflicts between them, as we can see the ‘**Trade war**’ between U.S.A. and China, in this type of situation SAARC countries can promote their products and collectively they can present alternatives of U.S.A. and Chinese products.
- 2) China is trying to create its monopoly in South Asia, as it is trying to control South China Sea. By collective efforts SAARC countries can control the growing influence of

China over South Asia as well as on world also.

- 3) A big part of the population is working population, so we are having a huge work force and by using it in proper manner we can develop the region in different manner.
- 4) A lot of big countries are showing their interest in SAARC and that thing shows the importance of SAARC. As China always tries to get the membership of SAARC and Russia also shows its interest to be the observer of the association. Not only these countries but U.S.A. also tries to mediate between India and Pakistan conflicts.
- 5) SAARC is the largest producer in the area of pulses, jute and independent in the area of grain also. If countries work with cooperation they will be able to contribute remarkable in the growth of their GDP.
- 6) The geographical location of the area provides a strategic important to the region. By using this in positive manner SAARC members can do very well in the area of hydroelectricity and agricultural products.
- 7) SAARC countries are connected on the basis of their culture and traditions. If they work together then SAARC can be as effective as ASEAN and G20 group.
- 8) As SAARC is having a demographic dividend, it is having a huge possibility of occupation and a lot of big countries try to develop their industries here. So we can say there is a huge possibility for the growth of MSME in the region

V. CONCLUSION

By analyzing all the facts we can say that there are some issues among the members but even than we can see that there are a lot of possibilities in the region. If the members take appropriate steps and coordinate with each other we will be able to utilize the potential of the region in actual form and SAARC will be working as the association of strong countries which will be having a lot of possibilities and opportunities in it and SAARC will be able to get its real relevance.

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