

CHAPTER II

Bilateral Relations , South Asia and the SAARC

'Bilateral' versus 'regional' is a politically sensitive and long-standing question of debate in South Asian relations. Article 10 of the SAARC charter specifies that no bilateral, contentious issue will be considered in the framework. Nevertheless, it remains a hard fact that every progress in the SAARC activity is heavily dictated by political constraints. Almost every bilateral controversy includes India as a party because it is only India which has common geographical, socio-cultural and economic bonds with each of the South Asian countries. But it is unrealistic to attempt regional solution to specific bilateral issues, such as the Kashmir issues between India and Pakistan, sharing of river water between India and Bangladesh, Tamil issue between India and Sri Lanka, the problem of trade and transit between India and Nepal, etc. The smaller countries are busy making their best efforts to discuss their bilateral problems within the SAARC forum to join a better bargaining deal vis-à-vis India, without realizing the fact that it is against the spirit of the SAARC charter. Not only this, the countries are often making an attempt to embarrass India publicly, the example being Sri Lanka deciding not to attend the seventh session of the SAARC Council of Ministers which was to be held from 1 July 1989 at Islamabad, following the dispute with India over the withdrawal of IPKF from Sri Lanka. Ultimately the meeting had to be postponed.

All the states in the region have one or the other kind of problem with India. It is for this reason that they have been more enthusiastic towards SAARC, while India may view that it is a ganging up of her neighbours against her. The bilateral issues are also important, whether it would be possible to solve various bilateral problems between India vis-à-vis other states of the region at its regional level is a moot question. Indeed the bilateral relations would affect the political environment in the region and determine the future of SAARC.

It is not only India's role and attitude that would determine the survival and sustenance of SAARC, but the attitude of smaller states is equally crucial. The

politico-strategic needs of states and their strategic perceptions are important factors whether or not SAARC can be an effective alternative to bilateralism. It may be noted that India's own policy and approach towards the neighbouring countries may also have a direct bearing on SAARC and determine attitude of the smaller states towards it. Sri Lanka's decision not to attend the Islamabad Summit of SAARC countries against India's decision to air drop food packets in Jafna is an important point in this connection.

The South Asian states have never been out of the influence of regional powers and the superpowers. Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan have often talked about China as an important factor in South Asia. They may even like to include China as a partner in the SAARC. Nepal has often tried to play the China card against India. Pakistan has been a major recipient of American arms aid and has friendly relations with it. India had friendly relations with the Soviet Union. It is, therefore, necessary to keep in view the attitude and policies of these major world powers with regard to regional cooperation in South Asia.

It is in this context that a study of the attitude of the member states as well as the major powers of the world towards the SAARC becomes relevant.

One of the most welcome developments in South Asia since the end of British colonial rule has undoubtedly been the emergence of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Till now, the countries of South Asia bearing mutual distrust, suspicion, and experiencing pulls and pressures of extra-regional powers, has been forging relationship across the oceans and mountains instead of looking inward at the prospects of mutually beneficial inter-relationships.

It is true that SAARC still represents seeds in the wind which have yet to be grounded and take root. But the significant thing is that despite blowing of hot and cold winds both internally and from external directions, the movement for cooperation has not come to a standstill. One happy augur has been that much before Dhaka's initiative (May, 1980) which led to the establishment of SAARC, intellectual interactions for Cooperation in South Asian region had become a growing phenomenon.

To many, SAARC is still a dream that remains distanced from fulfillment. Despite frequent meetings/summits the advance towards the cherished goal has so far remained hopelessly slow. South Asia, before the launching of SAARC, and South Asia now, that is, almost three decades after, does not look different either economically or politically. The scenario of bilateral relations in the SAARC community remains unimproved. It does not need much mental or intellectual exercise to explain this discordance between ideal and reality. The plain and simple explanation is that, SAARC remains hostage to those contentious issues that negate cooperation but beget suspicion and mistrust, even conflict or confrontation.

Conflict Resolution has become part of the peace-building process since the end of the cold war. Several conflicts have been resolved, some bilaterally, others though multilateral mechanisms. Both the legitimate when a conflict is deep-rooted and does not yield to easy solution nations now a days build fences of confidence – building measures with two objectives : first to ensure that the conflict does not escalate, and second to steadily, even if slowly, bring it to the threshold of resolution.

And if one takes a look at a map of conflicts around the world since the Second World War, one finds a common factor in these containment and resolution. The common factor is the willingness of the main actors in the conflict to limit and resolve it. In other words, bilateral readiness to resolve conflict is an essential factor for conflict resolution. Most conflicts being bilateral, a conflict bends towards limitation of resolution when the two actors agree that continuance or escalation is no longer to the advantage of either side. In this context, it is pertinent to appreciate merits of quiet diplomacy and even the non official dialogues. As is known, the United States and the USSR the non-official dialogues. As is known, the United States and the USSR worked bilaterally to bring down their stockpiles of nuclear warheads. Similar were the cases of Angola, Mozambique, etc.

The Sino-Soviet border conflict, the Sino-Vietnam war of 1979, the Iran-Iraq war the India-China border war, were all resolved bilaterally. All this does not rule out the case for conflict resolution through multilateral mechanism as happened in the case of Cambodia. Though , at it must be noted, it was preceded by Paris meetings between Heng Semín and Prince Sihanouk. With this as the background it

would be useful to examine the four tormenting issues that plague the sub continent.

India and Pakistan, one says with deep regret, were born as adversary states and the two have fought three wars over Kashmir and are now locked in what is called a low-intensity conflict since last five years.

The two neighbours are frontier with bilateral, trilateral and arbitration mechanism to resolve serious differences. The Indus river water disputes which affect the agriculture of both countries was resolved with the help of the World Bank. The Ran of Kutch dispute was referred to an international arbitration tribunal whose verdict was accepted by both countries. In the fifties, crisis situations created by population movements were resolved by the Prime Minister of the two countries. After the 1965 war both countries accepted mediation by the USSR but the Tashkent Agreement did not find favour with Pakistan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was able to bring about the exit from power of FM Ayub Khan in 1968.

The Simla Agreement on the other hand was a product of bilateral diplomacy, it held the peace in Kashmir for as many as 17 years though no talks were held between the two countries on the provisions of the Agreement.

The present conflict in Kashmir is of a peculiar nature. A political disquiet in the valley was adopted by Pakistan with all help and support. A pertinent question that now confronts the Governments of India and Pakistan is to determine whether the contentious issue is bilateral, i.e., between India and Pakistan or is it trilateral, i.e., to include the people of Kashmir? Policy-makers in the United States have been projecting it is a trilateral dispute. Apart from Ms. Raphael, President Clinton himself had said so after his meeting with Ms. Bhutto. The American sponsored track – compared of some eminent and distinguished scholars from India and Pakistan seems to be moving in this direction.

The Governments of India and Pakistan will have to face this issue frontally and jointly since some elements of the Kashmir polity on both sides of the border – claim that they are an equal party to the conflict and there can be no solution without their full participation and consent.

Whether the conflict is settled bilaterally or multilaterally, the first essential requirements is that the government of India and Pakistan agree that it must be resolved. The two sides have to talk to determine the nature of the conflict, the parties to it, and the ways and means of resolving it. For them to agree to solve the conflict, two prior situations are essential. First, both have to realize that the cost of the conflict for outweighs the gains. Second, both have to realize that neither can win it at the cost of the other. Only when these two conditions are realized can win it at the cost of the other. Only when these two conditions are realized will the prime ministers of the two countries agree to talk about a solution. Unfortunately, the prerequisite conditions have not been met yet.

The two sides positions are so rigidly polarised and are so totally irreconcilable that it is difficult to expect them to make compromises and accommodations for a solution. Will they agree to bring Kashmir people as a third party? Even if they do – which is a very big 'if' how do you translate people into persons? What can a third party like the United States do when the two sides hold on to irreconcilable positions? Impose a solution on them? Assume the task of the policeman 'in the subcontinent? Risk losing one as a friend by swording - or appearing to award – what may be seen by the order side as a partisan award? How can one assume that the US will be able to deliver in the nineties what USSR failed to do in the sixties?

The Nepal-Bhutan conflict had an Indian angle too. As is known, about 1000,000 Bhutanese are languishing in refugee camps in Nepal. There is a feeling in Nepal that the issue is trilateral since 'these refugees have traveled on Indian soil before reaching Nepal'. While all of us we are keen to sort this out peacefully, India does not wish to get dragged into a dispute amongst two nations that are friendly.

A more contentious issues pertained to the water dispute between India and Bangladesh. The need for augmentation of water resource from the Brahmaputra is self-evident in this regard. In the last analysis, only channel sing its massive flow can meet the ever-increasing needs of the two countries. But rigidity continues to bare the way.

The fourth tormenting issue is South Asia is the continuing Sri Lankan agony. The efforts being made by President Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga to resolve the knotty issue deserve support. The absence of serious bilateral conflicts and the existence of a sense of common political purpose are two essential starting points for an undertaking aimed at regional co-operation.

The countries of South Asia share many common values that are rooted in their social, ethnic, cultural and historical traditions. Perceptions about certain specific events or political situation of the world may differ, but such differences do not seem to create a gulf between them that cannot be bridged. In fact, the beginning of co-operation on a regional basis may be a positive force in generating a climate of harmony conducive to a better perception of what the countries in the region have in common and the value of this shared heritage.¹

In South Asia, as in other regions of the world, we have countries at different levels of development, some are relatively less developed than others. Any proposal for economic co-operation must consequently be formulated with the great care in order to ensure that the weak are not exploited and that the strong do not dominate. The areas selected should be only those in which cooperation will mutually benefit all the countries irrespective of existing economic disparities.

During the time Bangladesh presented its proposal of regionalism in South Asia, India was isolated from her neighbors due to her stand on Afghanistan, Kampuchia and Indian Ocean. In addition to the mention of the economic aspects of regional co-operation, Zia-ur-Rehman had also referred to 'peace, stability and security' in the region.

Pakistan also seemed to be apprehensive of the Bangladesh initiative because they thought that any framework for regional cooperation in South Asia would ultimately result in the economic and political domination of India in the region. Mistrust and suspicion grown out of the four decade old conflictual bilateral relations overshadowed Pakistani approach to the idea of South Asian Regionalism. Pakistan feared that deep involvement in a South Asian framework would gradually weaken its association with the West Asian countries. Thus it was clear that Pakistanis hesitations stemmed from 'Indo-Phobia', a fear that such an association

would provide India an opportunity to institutionalise its domination over the South Asian region in general and Pakistan in particular.

Introductory part of the paper mentioned that the idea of regional cooperation in South Asia is not new. Countries of the regionally and regionally under the umbrella of such forms as Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Far East (EGCAP), the Non-aligned movement and the Commonwealth.

The Draft however, has explained that these efforts have not fully exploited the vast potential of regional cooperation than exists and the consequential benefits that this will bring, collectively and individually to the countries of the region. The feasibility of such cooperation was informally discussed in various capitals at different times but until recently no concrete step was taken.

South Asia which include Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. Five of the seven nations that constitute the region are part of the same subcontinent. Maldives and Sri Lanka are islands closely situated to the shores of the mainland.

Bangladesh is the most easterly of the SAARC countries, surrounded on three sides by Indian territory and Burma. On the South-east lies Burma, the one and only non-Indian border of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh came to existence in 1971, before that it was the eastern wing of Pakistan, since 1947.

Bhutan is a landlocked country located in high mountains of the Himalayas, with India on the South and China on the North. The political system is absolute monarchy, established in 1879.

The Bhutanese economy is amalgamated with the Indian economy. Politically and economically Bhutan has a special tie-up with India. It is the integral part of the Indian defence set up. Bhutan is a member of the United Nations since 1971 and enjoys membership in eight specialized agencies. Bhutan has diplomatic relations only with India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Kuwait, Japan and a half a dozen European countries. But it maintains embassies only in New Delhi and Dhaka

besides a permanent representative at the UN and consulates in a couple of other countries.

The Union of India occupies a key position in Asia. It is bounded on the north, north-east and north-west by the mighty Himalayas, on the south-east by the Bay of Bengal and on the South west by the Arabian Sea. The southern tip is washed by the blue waters of the Indian Ocean.

India shares its political borders with Pakistan on the west and Bangladesh and Burma on the east. The northern boundary is made up of the Sinkiang province of China, Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan.

Maldives is an archipelago in the Indian ocean, to the west of Sri Lanka and South-west of India. Maldives got independence on July 26, 1965 and it became a republic in November 1968. Maldives is a member of the United Nations since 1968 and it enjoys membership in fourteen specialized agencies of the U.N.

The kingdom of Nepal is situated between India and China in the Southern slope of the Himalayas. Nepal is geo-politically part of India and strategically important in the defence of the Indo-Gangetic Plain.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan came into existence in 1947, following the partition of the subcontinent into two states, India and Pakistan.

Sri Lanka is an island separated from India by the shallow Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar. It is bounded on the west by the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar on the north and east by the Bay of Bengal and the South by the Indian Ocean.

Note has also to be taken of the fact that no region of the world is free from bilateral conflicts among the countries within it. Besides it is quite possible for countries given by some bilateral problems or conflicts to move towards cooperation among themselves for certain common purposes. The formation of SAARC is itself a proof of this assumption. However, it is also a fact that such cooperation cannot go very far unless there is a general feeling of confidence in each other's bonafides among its members. It, therefore, becomes imperative to identify the roots of political discord in South Asia and see how this discord can be met if not ended, in order to enable the movement of regional cooperation to grow stronger.

As Rajiv Gandhi highlighted in his statement at the Bangalore SAARC Summit: "Whether we will it or not, there is a symbiotic interchange between intensified regional cooperation and cordial bilateral relationships.² Haunting memories of past conflicts and tensions need not cleared the vision of statesman like leaders which South Asia urgently needs to resolve the various bilateral problems which obstruct the smooth progress of SAARC. It is important to cognize that in the technological environment of today history cannot be permitted to have a permanent too; on the peaceful and definitive settlement of even the most chaotic emotive disputes.³ In particular, since Indo Pakistan relations are bound to remain, the around which the fortunes of SAARC resolve, a rapprochement of this hypersensitive relationship is an organic cogency for promoting the cause of regional cooperation. Also since India is a common factor in most of the bilateral disputes, a special effort is needed from the India side to improve the political climate in South Asia.

The recent eruption of longstanding bilateral problems into major showdowns has made for qualitative determination in the political environment belying all hopes for a thaw in the regional equation in the wake of superpower dialogue, opening up the possibility of restructuring of international relations based on cooperation instead of conflict. It is not within the scope of this paper to go into the pools of the problems in South Asia but it is to be noted that at any given time India has had problems with one or another of its neighbours. Indo-Bangladesh ties remained stable, Indo-Sri Lanka relations took a sharp decline. Even as Indo-Sri Lankan relations remained poised for an upward turn, Indo-Nepalese relations touched a new low. More important, the core Indo-Pakistani relationship, which lies at the heart of South Asian political climate, has continued to remain slumped over a host of irritants – old and new. In the final analysis, it is on this conflict ridden relationship that any viable regional arrangement would hinge. It was no coincidence that it was only when India and Pakistan endorsed the idea of regional cooperation that SAARC really look off. This fact has it anything became more self-evident, India's proposals for inclusion of core economic areas in the SAARC agenda and the establishment of a Regional Fund were foredoomed to failures in the face of Pakistani resistance.

Similarly, Pakistan's plea for forging links with ASEAN could not take off the ground for want of India's endorsement.

The main problem with the South Asian region has been that there are sharp differences among its member countries.⁴ These countries contrast with each other in terms of population, size natural resources, level of economic development, political ideologies and institutions. They also have competitive economics as well. But, at the same time there are numerous similarities. All these countries belong to the same geographical region. Even the Maldives islands and Sri Lanka which are separated from the subcontinent geographically through a small stretch of sea are tied up with the region by numerous other factors. All the South Asian countries share common historical experiences, religion, culture, civilization, language, etc. These factors together provide a shape to South Asia as a region. It may also be noted that apart from these differences and similarities, the South Asian states are also faced with inter-state tensions and conflicts particularly with India. As a result they have followed not only different foreign policy perception but the development of harmonious relationships has also been hindered.

Apart from this, anxieties with regard to neighbours at the national level have led most of the South Asian nations to interact more intensively. Differences over the Ganga water between Bangladesh and India, for instance, probably contributed to the normalization and improvement of Bangladesh-Pakistan relations. Bhutan's special relations with India might have been prompted by Bhutan's anxieties over its sizeable Nepalese minority. Nepal's posture of equidistance from India and China and its proposal to declare itself as a zone at peace got enthusiastic support from Bangladesh and Pakistan.⁶

There are misunderstandings even now between India and Bangladesh between India and Pakistan and anxieties on the part of Nepal about its neighbours. There is however, one problem which has proved intractable in the past and is likely to remain in the foreseeable future and that is the Kashmir problem. Unfortunately, this is not merely a territorial problem, it seems to involve a sense of national identity. After the Simla Agreement, this problem has also been contained, though Pakistan strongly disagree with India over the interpretation of that agreement. Even then one can reasonably hope that regional cooperation involving both India and Pakistan may

be possible though in the perception of Pakistan the Kashmir problem remains to be solved. After normalization of bilateral relations and with the improvement of political climate, it may be possible to settle the outstanding issues including the Kashmir problem though some analysis view it as a kind of problem that can only be "dissolved and not solved" with the passage of time.⁷

Thus it became clear that success of SAARC depends on smooth relations among the member states.

The charter provided that "decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of unanimity" and "bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from the deliberations."

Any study of peace and stability in South Asia has to take into account the behaviour of India. The neighbours very much feel the self-awareness of India's pre-eminence and India's quest to assert itself in the affairs of the region. Every Indian neighbour, except perhaps Bhutan and Maldives, is involved, at least, in one dispute with India, like sharing of river waters, fencing the border, ethnic-religious conflicts, territorial dispute, nuclear policy or the desire to get declared a zone of peace, involvement in one another's internal problems to mention a few. Each state in South Asia perceives a threat to its territorial integrity from their big neighbour in the region. The fear of Indian dominance keeps them away from cultivating closer bonds based on common historical and cultural homogeneity. Smaller South Asian states felt that they are 'confronted with an India which is imperial in outlook and difficult to persuade.'¹ It is true that India has problems with all its neighbours in South Asia but that is because India alone shares land or maritime borders with other states in the sub-continent. The 'core geographic location and ethnic religious pluralism made India the common factor in any study of inter-state relations in South Asia. The dispute that marred India's relationship with Pakistan are different from its difficulties with Nepal or Bangladesh or Sri Lanka. This fact needs to be recognized while making an analysis of the nature, trends and shifts in bilateral relations in South Asia. What should be borne in mind in this context is that the success or failure of regional cooperation in the region depends on the positive or negative nature of India's bilateral interaction with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. There exists no major difficulties in India's bilateral relations with Bhutan and Maldives.

South Asia has been a conflict prone region right from the days of independence. Hindu-Muslim communalism with its far-flung ramifications, Bangladesh migration, sharing of waters of common rivers, c\disputes involving 'Tin Bigha' and New more Islands, border wire fencing of the Indo-Bangladesh – Borders, maritime boundary, Chakma refugee problem, Tamil tensions and the problem of Nepali . Ethnic in India and Indians in Nepal are the sources of bilateral conflicts in South Asia. The discussions of some these issues would help to understand the political situation of South Asia and to explore the possibilities of a security community in the Denschian frame work or a modified form. In relation to peace and security in South Asia, one important factors needs to be mentioned. As noted by Satish Kumar "One fact little or noted outside the region is that all of the South Asian states except Pakistan have already been brought within the matrix of an Indian security system which is regional rather than national in scope. In some cases, this is through formal agreements, in other through the unilateral extension of the Indian system to neighbouring states".² Obviously only Pakistan posed a challenge to the Indian doctrine of regional security. Thus, the major hurdles to this "United but rather unique form of regional security system" has been Indo-Pak relations.

India and Pakistan are the traditional rivals in the region. So, the heart of the question of regional cooperation is the question of Indo-Pak understanding. The relation between India and Pakistan are "the keystone for South Asian cooperation of any kind."³ and the relations between the two countries suffer from the "Crucial dichotomy of unmitigated personal warmth and undivided national suspicion and animosity."⁴ A fundamental and long term improvement in relations between those two countries are to be achieved for the viability of regional cooperation in South Asia. What is required is a reconciliation of the basic contradictions with regard to political values, political frameworks, international perceptions and attitude.⁵

The first ever summit of the South Asian heads of state and Government clearly brought out the attempt, by the neighbouring countries except perhaps Maldives. to isolate and pressurize India. The manner in which Sri Lanka President, Jayabardana praised Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. He termed Rajiv Gandhi and praised him as the chosen leader of India and said, " on Rajiv Gandhi we rest our

hopes, he must not fail us. He cannot, our duty is to help him to the utmost. He should tell us what each of us should do and we must respond as best we can". About India he said : "India the largest in every way larger than all the rest of us combined can by deeds and words create the confidence among us so necessary to make a beginning." Similarly General Zia-ul-Haq praised India and Rajiv. During the course of his address he departed from the prepared text of the speech and mentioned the consensus arrived at between himself and Jayawardana in the informal discussions on the eve of the Summit.⁶

Significantly on the eve of the summit, a Bangladesh daily carried an interview with General Zia. In this interview he listed various commonalities among the seven states and added : 'There is more than one factor that is common to all. There has been only one aspect and that is the India factor. India with whom we would like to join hands and be in the mainstream and play that much of a role which can generate confidence rather than fear for smaller neighbours. But unfortunately, it is only India which has some sort of disputes with every country.'⁷ He viewed the size of India as an inhibiting factor, 'Through SAARC we hope to convince India that it must take measures to play its part as the Central figure is South Asia but with the recognition that there in it nobody big or small. They are equal independent and autonomous states. India must also realize that is the smaller states which have the greater ego. It wants to coax India to play low profile and generate confidence in others. Let India buy something from small countries and only in this way we can live in peaceful co-existence.'⁸

Rajiv Gandhi viewed regional cooperation in a different way. To him the regional framework would not demand reshaping of foreign policies of the member countries. We have not sought to melt our bilateral relationship into a common regional identity, by rather to fit South Asian cooperation into our respective foreign policies as an additional dimension.

This summit provided opportunities to discuss the bilateral issues informally. Thus Rajiv Gandhi met Zia-ul-Haq, General Ershad and President Jayawardane separately to discuss bilateral problems.

The Bangalore Summit was significantly different from that of the first the sense that there was no collective effort to corner India.

Rajiv Gandhi inaugurated the Summit and stated that SAARC would not be a political association. Referring to bilateral relations he said ; "Bilateral relations have their difficult moments. SAARC reminds us that at such moments we should seek what unite us and not what divides. We have consciously decided not to burden SAARC with our bilateral concords." The Bangalore Summit, however, was clouded by tensions between the two larger powers India accused the Pakistan authorities of aiding Sikh separation in its Punjab state and of developing a nuclear bomb. In his talks with Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister Junejo denied reports that his country tested a triggering mechanism for a nuclear bomb. But Gandhi told the reporters : "To be honest, we are not utterly convinced." The bilateral squabble was brought up by Junejo in his speech referring to the troop movements : "We in South Asia should agree to notify one another significant troop movements. We shall agree also to invite observers when the movements exceed in agreed threshold." He said Pakistan was deeply oppressed to nuclear free zone. He then referred to 300 million Muslims in South Asia and gave a piece of advice to Rajiv Gandhi to follow the admirable of Example of Bangladesh President Ershad who had visited other countries of the region during his tenure as chairman of SAARC. Turning to Rajiv Gandhi, Junejo said, President Ershad had set a fine example, " A good example needs to be followed. We recommended it for your consideration, Mr. Chairman."⁹

The informal bilateral contact between Rajiv and Junejo did not arouse much enthusiasm. In fact it was far from cordial. That was because both sides failed to prepare the ground for the talks. Sattar asserted that the principle of bilateralism did not exist in the Simla Agreement.

At the same time, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Jayawardene held discussions in a cordial atmosphere with the Sri Lankan side stressing that it wanted India to continue its good offices.

As expected Hameed made a fervent plea for evolving a new mechanism, where at every meeting at Foreign Ministers level we have informal closed door meetings where could air we view candidly. He underscored : "SAARC must not

end up as a deaf, dumb and blind association. What I am saying is that as we grow we must face new challenges, new situations, new developments. I believe solutions to problems have to be found and worked out from within." While, "in our wisdom we had thought that it would be prudent to avoid speaking of bilateral issues, making such a rule sacrosanct, in the long run could spell disaster," he asserted. The issues were trans border terrorism, cross-border ethnic and religious affinity and differing perception of foreign policies. He spoke of ethnic, religious affinities among communities and warned against "Cross border affect bilateral relations and underline the SAARC Spirit".

Sri Lanka, strongly supported by Pakistan called for a change in the basic concept of the Association so as to provide for a discussion and possible more for settlement of bilateral problems.

India's opposition to SAARC taking up bilateral and contentious issues was made clear by External Affairs Minister N.D.Tiwari, at the very outset. In polite but categorical terms he told his colleagues from South Asia that relations between neighbours could not be wholly free from problems and therefore cooperation under SAARC was based on the primacy of over "common concerns" are individual differences. "We should not seek to drive full advantage from whatever unite us. Our is an effort to wider the area of agreement and cooperation, otherwise "we will end up in a statement and miss the immense opportunities that regional cooperation offers." He explained that Indian position on" cooperation under SAARC is predicted on the premise that our common concerns should be considered more important than our individual differences. We should seek to derive full advantage from whatever unite us. Our is an effort to wider the area of agreement and cooperation in spite of bilateral differences. That is precisely the reason why we took a conscious decision not to burden SAARC, with one bilateral concerns. For we realized that by doing so we will end up in a statement and miss the immense opportunities that regional cooperation offers. It is thus clear that India firmly rejected the suggestion that the forum of SAARC be used for sorting out bilateral problems. India maintained the review the SAARC had been set up to promote cooperation in technical, economic and social fields. In South Asia on the basis of immunity and

the inclusion of bilateral controversies in its scope would impose unbearable burdens on the grouping. Thus, bilateral issues just could not be raised in SAARC.

India and Pakistan had two ranks of ministerial level discussions on normalization of bilateral relations. Rajiv Gandhi and Junejo discussed a wide range of bilateral matters and agreed to accelerate the dialogue on outstanding issues. The two Prime Ministers decided to hold an early meeting of the secretaries for economic affairs of the two countries to discuss the promotion of economic cooperation and increasing trade.

Sri Lankan President spell out in detail how the peace accord between India and Sri Lanka how significance for the whole region. "success of SAARC or not will have to depend on the extent to which we can confront and solve bilateral problems we may have between us." "Sri Lanka's separatist problem" he added further, "Provides a convincing illustration in support of the generalized observations that have been made," And at the same time, "We have established for the conduct of our foreign relations on the principles that nothing would be done either, that could be detrimental to the other in any way," This, he said has to be "regarded as an unexceptionable principle and indeed prerequisite for good neighbourly relations." It would contribute to the stability of the region.

Bangladesh President Ershad said pointedly, 'we can't, of course, deviate from our commitments enshrined in our charter, particularly the respect for principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force.'¹⁰ He noted that political issues at the bilateral level had been purposefully kept out of the SAARC agenda for co-operation but "we have certainly albeit informally addressed issues that are of concern to us, internationally, regionally and even bilaterally."

The President of Maldives Abdul Gayoom, noted that although bilateral relations did not come under the banner of SAARC was sure that "every one of us is happy to note the new understanding reached between the two brotherly countries as a result of accord." He paid growing tributes to the Indo-Sri Lankan accord and said he saluted the political wisdom of both President Jayawardane and Prime

Minister Rajiv Gandhi is arriving at a very difficult solution to a four year old ethnic problem.

The king of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuk said that the most notable event in South Asia during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi as Chairman of SAARC was the Indo-Srilanka Agreement "By bringing about the peace accord Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayawardane have demonstrated their deep devotion to the spirit of SAARC and its noble objective of promoting peace and stability in our region.

However, the main SAARC show has been sidelined by the bilateral talks between Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto. With an earnest desire to work towards a new phase of relationship but the Prime Minister exchanged views on the bilateral issues. The emphasis in the Indian diplomatic approach, that there could be no discussion on confidence building measure until Pakistan abandoned its covert support terrorism in Punjab has undergone a significant shift. As a result three agreements, on the basis of the directions given by the two Prime Ministers, were signed.

1. An agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installations and facilities of both countries.
2. A cultural cooperation agreement; and
3. An agreement on the avoidance of double taxation of income from international air transport.

While the first two were signed by the foreign Secretaries of the two countries, the third one was signed by the Ambassador of India in Pakistan and his counterpart in India.

Therefore the most important factor hampering SAARC's progress is the ongoing bilateral dispute between different countries. Again it needs to be mentioned here that almost all the present disputes are Indian-Centred. Among the disputes that deserve to be pointed out here are Indo-Bangladesh tensions, Indo-Sri Lankan problems are the direct outcome of India's assertion of a self visualized dominance role in South Asia. Historically Indo Sri Lankan relation have remain cordial and

tension free. However, the last two decades have witnessed gradual deterioration of relationship primarily because of 'India's' hegemonic interference in the domestic affairs of its West Southern neighbour.¹² With the correct and overt support to Islands Tamils by both the central and state governments, a situation of armed confrontation developed initially which has later transformed into an armed conflict. The conflict managed to survive even with the arrival of the IPKE under the 1987 Accord and its subsequent departure from the Island. Indo-Nepali complication is product of India's continuous desire to maintain a tight control over Nepal's trade with other countries. Finally, the dispute that has dominated the region since India's independence is the ongoing dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir. It is neither necessary nor intended to give a detailed history of this dispute here but it needs to be stressed that this dispute can be easily resolved if India agrees to hold a plebiscite in accordance with UN resolutions acceptable to both India and Pakistan. The magnitude of the cost involved in denying the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir is indeed enormous for India as well as for the region. The Kashmir dispute embittered relationship between India and Pakistan since partition in 1947 and has caused three major wars (1948, 1965, 1971) and innumerable border clashes. Over there are enormous resources have been allocated to military preparedness primarily because of the impending danger of war stemming from the ongoing dispute over Kashmir. With the advent of indigenous struggle for the exercise of their right of self-determination, the situation in Kashmir has become acutely complex and the tensions between India and Pakistan have also acquired alarming proportions. The tragedy of the situation is that the magnitude of economy working cost involved is fully realized by both parties, yet a major effort to resolve this dispute continues to remain elusive.

Another thorn in the flesh of SAARC is Indian haste and insolence in hegemonistic maneuvers. Hegemony and zones of influence are recognized by neo realists as facts of international life with a stabilizing role. But somehow India has chosen to rub its small neighbors repeatedly on the wrong side in transmitting its message of superiority. In Sri Lanka, India is perceived to be the wicked cause of years of devastation by Tamil insurgency, which in turn Indian Army failed to contain coming in aid of Sri Lanka after the latter hand acceded to India's demands for

exercise of an imposing naval presence in Trincomali. Indian slight upon Sri Lankan President over the last SAARC summit was also unfortunate. Trade blockade of Nepal by India finally helped a more obliging government into power there, but very strong and articulate opposition is also surfacing in Nepal against Indian water-plans, and a general air of suspicion, far from diminishing is now resounding. In Bhutan, the agitating Nepalese immigrants were perceived to be a Sikkimisation maneuver masterminded by India. The suspicion has since been somewhat dimmed by subsequent Indian aloofness for the time being on the issue of Nepalese evicted from Bhutan, for whom some international care only has been mobilized at present and refuge camps set up within Nepal. In Bangladesh, India is regarded by most people as the villain of the peace of statement on Ganges water sharing and for sheltering cross-border Chaka violence. In turn, people in Bangladesh betray undisguised sympathy for Kashmir, Khalistan and Assam separatist insurgency, which they see as genuine national liberation movements, although the last one has overtly anti Bengali bias. In fact quite a few in Bangladesh like to believe that if Assam separates, there many increased scope of revived of traditional cooperation between Assam and Bangladesh at grassroots level, whereas right now all traffic is virtually closed. With the growing realization of the importance of neighbourly people to people contacts for sustainable development, some in Bangladesh also dream of expanded relationship with Lusai Hills people in the new future, Cross border trade in Bangladesh is now limited to West Bengal, Bihar, Meghalaya, Tripura. Small entrepreneurs in Bangladesh what in expansion all the way around denied at the moment. Relationship nevertheless, at the governmental level between Bangladesh and India has markedly improved after the opening of the Tin Bigha Corridor.

Yet it is no wonder that smaller maritime states in the SAARC welcome, as indeed so some other Indian ocean states, Pakistan's unequal attempt to deny Indian naval domination of the Indian ocean. On the other hand, U.S. and Indian joint naval exercise as well as Indian Defense, Ministers goodwill visit to China point to a changing scenario in Asian Security perspective that cannot fail to be taken note of.

How can Bangladesh then find solace in SAARC? Threatened as Bangladesh is from within SAARC itself and it has to explore multiple involvements to underpin its security. A SAARC security cooperation at the moment is a far cry. Independent military exchanges between Bangladesh and China, Bangladesh and USA, Bangladesh and Thailand, Bangladesh and Pakistan as well as Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia contribute to a limited assurance on the ground. For greater self-assurance, Bangladesh of necessity shall have to evolve its own peculiar non-conventional mix of deterrent national services and supportive international pressures.

As the largest and the stablest democratic power, India has a special responsibility in setting the tone for bilateral relationships and giving a lead in evolving an acceptable framework of cooperative relations in the region. Indeed, if India has to rise to the challenge of true leadership, it can hardly fight shy of taking steps for meaningful accommodation with its smaller neighbours. Its ability to influence regional affairs would essentially depend on how it carries neighbors with it in creating a climate conducive for accelerating peace and development in the region.

Charges of India assuming the mantle of a regional manager - notwithstanding its recent showdowns with Sri Lanka and Nepal and its action in Maldives - are too factor. There is, however, need for India not only projecting itself in terms of sheer power but also attaining greater sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of its smaller neighbours. Sustained efforts must be made by India to explore the possibilities of wider mutuality than strict reciprocity in Seeking good-neighbourness.

This is not to argue that the smaller nations of South Asia have no responsibility towards building a climate trust and friendship' in the region. They would indeed do well to eschew deliberate, distortions of the existing geopolitical realities in the region. It is self-evident therefore that they would have to learn to come to terms with themselves - in overcoming the problem of national identity and pressures of political challenges - before they can come to terms with India.

It is not however, beyond the reach of collective wisdom for all South Asian countries, big or small to rise above the confines of narrow individual interests to address themselves to the common concern of the region. Regionalism, in order to be meaningful, would have to be essentially supportive of bilateral relationships. Given the geopolitical imperatives, bilateralism is going to remain an enduring feature of the regular and SAARC cannot obviate the need for bilateral settlement of bilateral problems. Even the staunchest advocates of India must concede that such a gesture of offering generous, even unilateral concessions to its neighbours will have to be made in a bilateral setting and can't be worked out in a regional forum.

The basic dilemma for India remains how to reconcile its preference for bilateralism as a model for building relationships with the compulsions of regionalism. This assumes significance in view of the fact that efforts have been made to bring in bilateral issues like India's role in Sri Lanka and the Ganges water dispute into the SAARC forum not so much in the belief of finding solutions in a regional framework as employing bargaining tactics to put pressure on New Delhi. India reacted sharply to Sri Lanka's boycott of the Foreign Ministers meeting in August 1988 on the issue of IPFK presence on Sri Lankan soil as constituting a violation of the SAARC charter.¹³

It is one thing for SAARC to provide a neutral setting for backstage high level bilateral contacts major breakthrough were achieved by Gandhi – Jayawardena meeting at Bangalore and Gandhi-Bhutto meeting at Islamabad – but it is entirely different matter if SAARC meets were to be reduced to seem a bilateral exchanges. What is not being adequately appreciated in some circles is that the real question involved in this test case is whether SAARC can afford to lend itself to being made a hostage to not only bilateral pressures, but, more important, domestic compulsions of an individual states. If SAARC is to achieve its true potential the impulses for both strengthening of the existing bilateralism and exploring of new avenues of regional cooperative must be allowed to move on their independent tracks. The twin tracks once not mutually exclusive and can indeed be simultaneously pursued without forcing the space in either direction.

India Bangladesh Relations –

As a noted scholar reiterates : "Commonalities in South Asia are mostly bilateral between India and each of the neighbors countries separately and individually. There is a bit of India in every other country of South Asia. As against this, there is hardly anything of significance which is common between India's one neighbor and the other. All the South Asian countries have only one thing in common amongst themselves and that is India.³³ Sovereign states and formal boundaries can of course, hardly check cultural overlaps. But what aggravate the South Asian Scenario is the perception that India desires to play a regional role commensurate with its regional pre-eminence, 'regional primary', as a commentator opines, has been an 'unstated but clearly pursued objective' of India's neighbourhood policy.³⁴ The frequently highhanded nature of Indian efforts at establishing and emphasizing their regional preponderance worsen the situation even more : as Bekhari argues," in their attempts to get India accepted as a dominant regional power the Indians have only succeeded in projecting it as the domineering regional power.³⁵ Inevitably, though regrettably, all this generates apprehensions, arouses suspicions and contributes to the grievous lack of trust and confidence between the South Asian Seven.

Likewise, India has a host of difficulties with other neighbours like Bangladesh (sharing of river waters, the Chakmas and the influx of migrants) and Nepal (differences over 'zone of Peace' concept, whether there should be separate treaties for trade and Transit, etc) along with some minor irritants in the case of Bhutan and Maldives. All these contentious issues and the manner in which Sri Lanka has held SAARC verily to ransom are indicative of the fact that despite pious hopes to the contrary, unresolved bilateral disputes are bound to exert a negative influence on the process of regional cooperation.

As a consequence of producing nearly the same or similar goods, the South Asian seven inevitably compete in world markets for almost identical exports : India and Bangladesh compete for jute goods, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

compete in respect of manpower exports to West Asia although the impact of this competition is not yet actually realized due to volume of the demand.

The fundamental dissonance between India and the others is also a major handicap; as a renowned economist asserts, "The vastness of the economy of one of the member countries of the group, India, and its growing industrial infrastructure makes economic cooperation – leaving aside trade – between the countries difficult. The fear of becoming economically dependent upon India haunts the psyche of other SAARC nations and explains, for instance, why Pakistan imports iron ore from Africa and not from India, and Sri Lanka imports apples from Australia instead of India. In both cases, the neighbours suffer from the misgiving that dependence upon India might imply that at any times India could exploit or even obstruct their natural growth and prosperity and this anxiety impels them to prefer extra-regional power for foreign aid and assistance for national development. Not surprisingly, a recent analysis highlights : "since the withdrawal of colonial rule, the independent South Asian States have consciously pursue policies aims at distancing their respective economics from each other As a result of these policies, now a sizeable and extremely powerful budget commercial, industrial and professional interests have come into existence in these countries which do not see any advantage in enhancing regional economic cooperation. Such cooperation, on the contrary, is seen as harmful and destabilizing.³⁶ As a result of all these, constraints, the noted economist cited earlier, in response to the rhetorical query of whether an economic justification exists for SAARC, asserts that "there is no economic rationale."³⁷

No wonder, a noted scholar asserts that "the greatest obstacle in the way of regional cooperation among countries in South Asia is the exceedingly meager knowledge about each other's country in terms of their needs, perceptions and sensitivities.

India's second diplomatic strategy was the politics of bilateralism in her relations with her South Asian neighbours. This was openly projected as the performed model for building relations with neighbouring countries.

For India, such a strategy has considerable advantages. The first is that the bilateral approach can take into account the unique features of each relationship. The standardized model of uniforming the terms and patterns of bilateral interaction can be avoided. The needs of countries like Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives are for example, very different from those of other countries in the region. They can be met more easily than those of the more defiant and bigger neighbour.

The second is that through a process of bilaterism, India can avoid the internationalization of contentious issues. In South Asia in which she may have to reckon with many actors. Almost all the post-Nehru governments have made this into a major objective of India's diplomatic strategy. One of the principal explanations for this pattern of behaviour is the bitter experience India had on the Kashmir issue when New Delhi internationalized it by referring the matter to the UN after the Pakistani invasion of Kashmir in 1948. The UN refusal to take a position on the merits of the case generated a general opposition to the reference of any contentious bilateral issue again to international for .

The third perceived advantage of bilaterism is that it provides India the possibility of avoiding any situation where all the other countries could unite against her. Since all of India's neighbours have serious reservations about her, such an eventuality can hardly be excluded. India, therefore, has always avoided such a situation. Even at the time of establishing the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), India insisted on separating bilateral from any multilateral cooperation.

The fourth is the appropriate leverage that bilaterism gives to India of being generous to some nations and harsh to others. Such a behaviour has indeed been discernible in Indian Diplomacy. To risk a generalization, it could be argued that while with most states, Indian diplomacy was a combination of generous big brother behaviour giving aid, seeking common ground, and pressing them to fall in line on issues where India's national interests were at stake, relations with Pakistan on the other hand, have been consistently antagonistic.

This bilateral strategy became evident after 1971 Bangladesh war when all the negotiations with Pakistan were carried out bilaterally, and when the Simla

Agreement of July 1972 between Indira Gandhi and Z.A. Bhutto clearly incorporated India's preference for bilateralism over multilateralism. All differences, it was agreed, were to be settled through bilateral negotiations'.³⁹ In line with the Indian thinking the Simla Agreement clearly stipulated that Indians and Pakistanis alone were responsible for the maintenance of peace along the border. Though such a strategy was not completely successful since Pakistan had often tried to revenge upon this agreement, India has consistently refused to accept the involvement of any third party in Indo-Pakistan relations.

With other countries of South Asia, India was, however, more successful in imposing the strategy of bilateralism. They were less recalcitrant. None of them could really defy India, even if attempts were made to extricate themselves from an excessive Indian hold, since all of them were dependent on India in one way or the other. An open border with India, for example, is Nepal's and Bhutan's life-line. Neither of them landlocked as they are would be able to survive economically if India were to cut them off. Nepal's attempts to become more independent were rapidly stymied by India's decision to cut transit arrangement with her. Sri Lanka's ability to manage the Tamil crisis without some cooperation from India is doubtful. If the massive Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka in 1987 to force the Tamil Tigers to abandon their demand for independence and to re-enter the political process, was not successful it is difficult to imagine that the Sri Lankan Government can handle the crisis on her own. The Maldives, off the Indian coast, can hardly survive (as illustrated by India's 1989 military intervention) as a viable state without some protection from India.

Though Bangladesh is more resistant to Indian pressures, she has been just as unsuccessful in breaking out of the straitjacket of bilateralism as she has been of saving herself from the cruel annual cycle of flood and drought. Her river system draws water from rivers in India, Nepal, Bhutan and China, all of which have to pass through Indian territory – a formal Dependence from which she can hardly escape.⁴⁰ The Bangladesh government proposed a six country meeting that would have given her some diplomatic monosure. But India scratched the proposal.

India's apartment determination to continue the politics of bilateralism vis-à-vis her neighbors has created an asymmetrical situation in which Indian is clearly the

beneficiary. It is, therefore, hardly probable that she will abandon such a position, even if she is criticized by the international media for having become a 'regional bully'.⁴¹ and for having developed an Indian variant of the Monroe Doctrine⁴²

Indian destabilization, therefore, can't be attributed domestic reasons only, but is also determined by what happens in the neighbourhood. The link is clearly evident. The foreign policy of India is no more just simple interaction with the other South Asia, and of reacting to situations whenever it becomes necessary India's policy is no longer based on the politics of non-intervention. Establishing its predominance in the region is generally perceived as being vital for India's national security. India's decision to intervene in Sri Lanka, stop the Tamil Tigers from becoming independent, stigmatize a coup d'état against the existing government in the Maldives, pressure the Nepalese not to buy arms from the Chinese, propose to participate in Bhutanese negotiations with China, insist on the return of the Chakma refugees to Bangladesh and warn Pakistan of the dangerous consequences of her support to Kashmiri and Sikh dissidents are growing signs of India's determination to play a predominant role in South Asia.

Considering the fact that practically all the six small states of South Asia are faced with growing systemic instability, India had to mobilize all the different components of her diplomacy that would make her relations with them viable and effective.

Bilateral relations with each of the six states thus was the principal Indian strategy in South Asia. And, with the passage of time, India has used this strategy more and more openly and more and more ruthlessly to clearly express her interest in Development in the region. Bilateralism has become very much a major component of India's policy which no government in India can possibly afford to ignore.⁴³

In the Determination of Indo-Bangla relations, just as with India Pak relations, domestic political factors play an important role. There is, however, one vital difference – that it is virtually a one way street unlike Indo-Pak relations. The Indian politics. The only exception in Indo-Bangla relations is the issue of Chakma

insurgency while the agitation against Bangladeshi infiltrations into Assam has the potential to result in political difficulties for India and thereby strain bilateral relations.

Indo-Bangladesh relations started on a happy note. India's role in the Bangladesh liberation war, particularly military intervention, earned for India the friendship of Bangladesh, resulting in the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace between the two countries in March 1972. August 1975) represented a period of good relations between the two countries when the domestic and foreign policy thrust was in tune with that of India. Two basic elements of state policy – the use of religion for nation-building and external support (mainly that of a super power) for regime stability, elements which have contributed most to the enmity between India and Pakistan, did not find any place in the policies of Bangladesh. Mujib enunciated a secular, democratic and socialistic policy of nation-building, and he steered clear of alliances with super powers.⁴⁴

As the champion of Panchasila, India has maintained cordial relations with neighbouring countries. So also it has maintained a cordial relationship with Bangladesh right from its emergence in 1971. It has been a consistent and vitally important principle of Indian Foreign Policy to refrain any interference in the internal affairs of other countries and more particularly, in the internal affairs of its neighbours. But the dirty struggle for power that emerged in Pakistan after the first ever general elections held in March 1970, created a highly taxing and dangerous situation in East Pakistan, which forced India to support, on humanitarian grounds, the rights of the Bengalese living in East Pakistan.⁴⁵

However, these moves and others failed to produce any meaningful result in 1971, India became aware of the fact that it would have to intervene in the crisis for effecting a settlement of this crisis. On 15th June 1971, Mrs. Indira Gandhi declared in the Rajya Sabha that, "We will have to go through hell to meet the challenge posted by the developments in Bangladesh." From then onward India stated providing help to the refugees and their Mukti-Bahini for securing their rights, which involved the liberation of Bangladesh. The crisis soon developed into the December 1971 Indo Pak War. The Indian Army formed against the West Pakistan army in East Bengal. After a highly efficient and successful military operation of nearly two weeks the joint command, led by Lt. General Jagjit Singh Arora, was in a

position to secure the liberation of Bangladesh on 16 December, 1971, India had granted recognition to Bangladesh. After the defeat of West Pakistani army in Bangladesh the administration of the country was entrusted to the leaders of Bangladesh. Soon afterwards, Bangladesh was granted recognition by other state and this completed the process of liberation of Bangladesh.

India played a leading role in the liberation of Bangladesh. Its people made bold sacrifices for securing to the people of Bangladesh their freedom and their rights. These historic and unparalleled sacrifices made by the people of India and the material and moral support that they gave to the people of Bangladesh combined together to provide a solid foundation for the development of warm and highly friendly and cooperation relations between India and Bangladesh.⁴⁶

It was on 6th December 1971, the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, amidst thunderous applause informed the Lok Sabha the decision of the Government of India to grant recognition to the peoples Republic of Bangladesh. Since the fateful day, the two countries have been engaged in the process of developing friendly and cooperative relations between them. The immediate goal of security the liberation of Bangladesh from the clutches of Pakistan was accomplished and December 16, 1971, by the Joint Army Command of the two states and this was followed by certain bold steps to usher the history of Indo Bangladesh relations into an era of friendship and cooperation based upon the spirit of mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and commitment to the principals of Panchashela, non-alignment, beneficial bilateralism and peaceful means for the settlement of all issues and problems.

The similarities in the foreign policy perceptions of the two countries, the understanding regarding the common needs, goals and objectives, the recognition of the sacrifices made by India for securing the liberation of Bangladesh, the dependence of Bangladesh on India for meeting the immediate security and economic needs and the mutual understanding among the leaders of the two countries gave good support to the cause of developing highly cooperative and friendly Indo-Bangladesh relations. The tone was set right on 6th December 1971, when Mrs. Indira Gandhi, while announcing the decision to grant recognition to Bangladesh observed "In future the Governments and people of India and

Bangladesh who share common ideals and sacrifices, would forge a relationship based on principles of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-intolerance in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit.⁴⁷

The first chancery of Bangladesh was formally opened on 9th December 1971, and it was formally announced that the two countries had entered into a number of mutual agreements in lateral relation. By these agreements India pledged its military support, help and involvement in the struggle (war) for the liberation of Bangladesh. India further undertook the pledge to withdraw its armed forces from liberated Bangladesh, agreed that liberated areas would be immediately handed over to the Government of Bangladesh, and that India would defend Bangladesh against any external threat. The agreements affirmed allegiance to Panchsheel and non-alignment. However, no restriction was sought to be placed on the rights of the people of Bangladesh to have their own independent foreign policy. By another agreement, India decided to give Rs. 100 crores immediately to Bangladesh for helping the initiation of the process of socio-economic reconstruction in that country. Both the Governments also entered into a detailed trade agreement envisaging an annual trade of 100 crores between the two countries. On 16th December, 1971, Bangladesh was liberated and the Government of Bangladesh took over the administration of the country. It was on 8th January 1972 that Pakistan announced its decision to release 'Sheikh Mujib, who was under detention in Pakistan since 25th March 1971. During his brief stop at New Delhi, on 10th January 1972, Shaikh Mujib, paid glowing tributes to India for her historic role in the liberation of Bangladesh. He observed that the people of his country would never forget the sacrifices made by their Indian brothers for making it possible for them to achieve liberation. He declared that bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries are bound to become more and more mature and developed in the times to come.⁴⁸

On March 19, 1972, India and Bangladesh signed a 25 years Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace. It was a bold attempt to cement the Indo-Bangladesh friendship. The Treaty, with 12 Articles under preamble was designed to maintain protocol and good neighbourly relations, to transform the borders into a border of external peace and friendship, to uphold non-alignment, peaceful co-

existence, to safeguard peace stability and security, to promote and strengthen the existing relations of friendship and cooperation and to reaffirm the determination to follow peaceful means for the settlement of disputes well as to uphold the aims and principles of the U.N. Charter.

The 12 Articles of the Treaty provided for the steps agreed by both the countries as the means for securing the ideals and objectives listed in the preamble. Both the countries declared that there shall be lasting peace and friendship between the two countries and their people and that each side shall respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs, of the other side, The two shall further develop and strengthen the relations of friendship, good neighbourliness and all round cooperation existing between them. Under Article 2, both sides condemned colonialism and racism in all forms and affirmed their determination to strive for their final and complete elimination. Both agreed to cooperate with other states in achieving these aims. Under Articles 3 and 4, both the sides reaffirmed their faith in non-alignment and peaceful co-existence and to resolve to maintain regular mutual conflicts on major international problems affecting the interests of both the states. Both sides reaffirmed their faith in non-alignment and peaceful co-existence and to resolve to maintain regular mutual conflict on major international problems affecting the interests of both the states. In the next Article i.e., Article 5, both the countries agreed to continue to strengthen and widen their mutually advantages and abroad cooperation in economic, scientific, technical trade transport and communications fields. Under Articles 6 and 7 both the countries agreed to make joint studies and take action in the field of flood control river basin development and the development of hydro-electric power and irrigation, and further to promote relations in the fields of art, literature, education culture, sports and health. Each side solemnly declared under Article 8 that it shall not enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party and that both the countries shall refrain from any aggression against the other and shall not allow the use of its territory for committing any act that may cause military damage to or constitute a threat to the security of the other. Article 10 of the Treaty declared that ; "Each of the high contracting parties shall refrain from giving any assistance to any third party

taking part in an armed conflict against the other party. In a case either party is attacked or threatened with attack the high contracting parties shall immediately enter into mutual consulting in order to take appropriate affective measures to eliminate the threat and thus ensure peace and security of their countries. Each of the high contracting parties solemnly declares that it shall not undertake any commitment, secret or open towards one or more states which may be incompatible with the present treaty." In the last two articles it was stated that the Treaty was for 25 years and was renewable by mutual agreement, and that any differences in interpreting the Treaty that may arise shall be settled bilaterally through peaceful means in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

Evaluation : with these provisions the Treaty constituted a bold attempt towards the securing of peace stability in South Asia. This Treaty affirmed India's respect for the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of Bangladesh and set at rest the western and Pakistani propaganda that India has an eye over Bangladesh. The Treaty, observed the Patriot, was the first formal and certainly unique step taken up by two important Asian countries for the stabilization of peace in this sub-continent. It commented the growing Indo-Bangla friendship and laid solid foundations for the extension of bilateral cooperation between the two countries. It was neither defence pact nor a security pact designed against any other country. Like the Indo-Bangladesh Treaty was a bilateral treaty for positive bilateral cooperation. It was a solemn treaty solemnly signed for strengthening both world peace and bilateral relations. Indeed, this treaty was a welcome and fruitful way of ushering Indo-Bangla relations into an era of enduring peace, friendship and cooperation.⁴⁹

After the signing of the Treaty, both the countries conducted further negotiations for enlarging trade between them. On March 28, 1972, the two countries entered into a trade agreement providing for a trade of nearly Rs. 100 crores. Firstly, the agreement provided for border trade for people living within 15 km. belt of the borders and its aim was to help the people of border areas to meet their day to day requirement. But, the trade was restricted to specific commodities. Secondly, it provided for a Rs. 50 crore two way trade goods of special interest of both the countries on a balanced basis. Thirdly, this agreement laid down that if India

exported goods worth more than its share 25 crores, then the payment of the overflow shall be in the form of temporary loan to Bangladesh and shall not carry any interest. This agreement was indeed a symbol of liberal and friendly attitude of India towards its new neighbor. On July 5, 1973, India and Bangladesh signed a new 3 year Trade Agreement and it was agreed that the two countries would now export goods worth of Rs. 305 crores each way. The trade relations were given a new big boost on May 16, 1974 through a number of agreements on wide ranging bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

For presenting cooperation in the fields of science and technology. India and Bangladesh agreed, on June 10, 1972, for cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy and space research. On August 27, 1973, a treaty was signed for exchange of information on atomic research and literature between the two countries, scientists of both the countries were to be given opportunities for research and training in atomic research laboratories in either country. In May 1974, when India conducted for first underground and fully controlled peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE), Bangladesh welcomed the development as an important step towards the development of developing countries. The Bangla Times, an influential daily at Bangladesh, described India's PNE as a matter of pride for developing countries. It wrote that this explosion will have deep impact on the politics of Asia and the subcontinent. It called upon the neighbours not to feel unduly apprehensive from India because India's policy was a peaceful policy.

Thus, close cooperation in the fields of trade, commerce, education, cultural activities and sports was registered in the post-Treaty period of Mujib era. Particularly after the understanding reached during May and September 1974, meetings between the leaders and delegations of the two countries, some very important and major agreements were reached for effecting closer cooperation between the two countries. The May 1974 Summit Conference between India and Bangladesh produced very healthy and fruitful results. The following Four Joint ventures were cleared : (i) W.A. Uonont Plant Joint phatak in Bangladesh based on limestone supplied from Meghalaya in India; (ii) A clinker plant in Meghalaya for supplying either to Bangladesh; (iii) A Fertilizer Plant in Bangladesh for the supply of urea of India and (iv) A sponge Iron Plant in Bangladesh with the supply of iron ore from

India. The decision to constitute a joint commission on Jute was another landmark achieved at the summit. All these steps for bilateral economic collaboration were commendable. For promoting cooperation in the fields of science and technology, India and Bangladesh agreed on 10 June, 1972 for cooperating in the peaceful use of atomic energy and space research. On 27 August 1973, a treaty was signed for exchanging information on atomic research and literature between the two countries. Scientists of both the countries were to be given opportunities for doing research and training in atomic research laboratories in either country.

Realising the necessity of settling the border problem, with India and Bangladesh conducted negotiations which led to the signing of Border Agreement on May 19, 1974. Under this agreement, India retained the Berubari enclave and in exchange Bangladesh received Dahagram and Angarpata enclaves under perpetually leased corridor for connecting Dahagram and Angarpata enclaves and a perpetually leased corridor for connecting Dehagram with Pambari Mouza of Bangladesh. "The border demarcation was to be so framed as to cause the least disturbance to the population, to be as the as possible on both sides and to make it easy to recognize the borders between the two countries." It also provided for exchange "expeditiously of all enclaves." Another feature of the agreement was regarding the fixation of midstream boundaries along Muhuri and Fenny rivers. This ensured that two sides would get water from the rivers all the time. The Border Agreement was as the Tribute on May 21, 1974, observed "can example in good neighbourliness and a major friction remover."

Increased controls and exchange of visits became regular features of Indo-Bangladesh relations in the Post-Treaty years of Mujib era. In November 1972, President of Bangladesh, Mr. Abu Sayeed Chowdhury paid a 10 days state visit to India and in June 1974, President of India, Mr. V.V.Giri returned the state visit to Bangladesh. Both the visits strengthened the bonds of friendship between the two countries. The visits revealed that there was close identity of rivers between the two countries. Similar contacts at the ministerial level covers also maintained. In April 1973, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh visited India and in return Mr. Swarn Singh, Indian Minister of External Affairs, paid on official visit to Bangladesh relations and cooperation was reviewed. After the discussions the deterioration to give

practical shape to the deeply felt and just aspirations of the people of two countries for socio-economic well being, was expressed.

With a view to further strength on the very friendly relations existing between the two countries a Summit Conference between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujib was held on May 1, 1974. It was during this conference that important discussions were held over matters of views was held in an atmosphere of friendship, cordiality and in the background of traditional friendship and understanding between the two countries. Discussions on matters like trade and commerce sharing of Ganga waters, functioning of Joint Rivers Commission, boundary disputes, expansion of cooperation in field on Jute export, issues of joint ventures etc., were objectively discussed and certain agreements were reached. Similarly international problems, like energy crisis were discussed. On May 19, 1974, India and Bangladesh signed the Border Agreement and announced that an understanding had been reached regarding the resolution of Farakka barrage issue.

Similarly, India and Bangladesh exhibited complete understanding cooperation at the time of Simla Summit between India and Pakistan. Bangladesh welcomed whole heartedly the Simla Agreement and the Delhi Agreement between India and Pakistan as two positive steps towards peace and stability in South Asia. India kept Bangladesh fully informed about the nature, scope and progress of the discussions with Pakistan. In April 1973, India and Bangladesh jointly prepared a three point programmes on the basis of which was to conduct negotiations with Pakistan. The Indo-Pak agreement of 1973, reflected the fact that India fully upheld the commitments that had been made with Bangladesh in respect of the repatriation POWs and refugees.

Further, India left no stone unturned for helping Bangladesh to get recognition from other countries and its due place in the United Nations. India gave full support to the August 9, 1971 application made by Bangladesh for getting the membership of the United Nations. However, the Chinese veto against Bangladesh prevented surprise in this direction. In February 1974, Pakistan gave recognition to Bangladesh and it was followed by the accord of recognition by China. This development cleared the way of Bangladesh entry into United Nations. In the context of Indo-Pak-Bangladesh relations, the April 1974, tripartite talks

between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh produced an important agreement leading to the repatriation of Pakistani POWs who were still being detained in India because of Bangladesh earlier decision to try them on charges of genocide and war crimes.

Even the complex issue of Farakka was temporarily resolved through interim agreement of April 18, 1975. Under an interim and short term agreement reached at Dacca, it was agreed that India was to draw a specified quantity of water for its feeder canal for the benefits of Calcutta Port.

It was further agreed that a joint team of experts would supervise and observe the effect of withdrawals on Bangladesh and the Hoogly river. A joint team was to be stationed at Farakka was keeping a record of the water fed into the feeder canals.

The agreement was an important breakthrough in the Farakka dispute between India and Bangladesh. It was hoped that this short term agreement would pave the way for an amicable long term accord on Farakka. It was an agreement reached through bilateral negotiations and this gave it added importance.

The above account of Indo-Bangladesh during the Mujib era, clearly reveals that the conduct of relations between the two countries got a positive and good start. During a short period of joint four years both the countries were in a position to solve the Border disputes and reach an interim agreement on Farakka. Both were in a position to establish highly friendly and peace gave a solid foundation to Indo-Bangladesh friendship and cooperation. India, after having helped the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign independent republic, came forward whole heartedly to help the new country in overcoming the problems at socio-economic reconstruction. Through loans and aid, material and moral support and a series of trade and economic agreements, India gave valuable help to Bangladesh during the initial years of its independence. The Government of Bangladesh, particularly Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, recognized fully the sacrifices made and the help given by India to Bangladesh and therefore, felt indebted to India. All the agreements reached during this period was backed by complete understanding and mutual respect for each other's needs, desires and interests.

However, along with his positive development, the march of time produced certain irritants in Indo-Bangladesh relations, particularly, the carrying out of anti-India propaganda by certain sections of Bangladesh press and vested interests, at times, made the environment became a source of concern particularly towards the close Mujib era. Some scholars even go to the extent of saying that Mujib's friendship with India was a factor in the August 1975 coup against Mujib's regime. The following factors were responsible for the emergence of anti India propaganda in Bangladesh during the closing years of Mujib era :

- 1) Existence of Pro-Pakistan factors in Bangladesh.
- 2) Internal opposition to Sheikh Mujib's policies particularly to the centralization and concentration of authority into his own hands.
- 3) The Pakistani and Chinese propaganda that India was having imperialistic designs over Bangladesh.
- 4) The difference over Farakka Barrage issues.
- 5) Rise of communalism in Bangladesh.
- 6) The strong dissatisfaction in Bangladesh over the increased corruption, shortage of essential commodities, particularly foodstuff, and uncontrolled smuggling on Indo-Bangladesh borders.
- 7) The strong criticism by the Indian press (West Bengal based) of the role of opposition in Bangladesh, produced a strong reaction and gave rise to considerable opposition to the role of India in the sub-continent. In particular, this made Moulana Bhashani and his party a strong critic of India.
- 8) This failure of the Government of Bangladesh to effectively run the administration and check the spread of an-India propaganda.⁵⁰

Indian and Bangladesh were in confrontation over a number of issues : the Borubari corridor is the New Moore Island/Talpatty territorial dispute which degenerated into a minor military incident; Indian involvement in the armed struggle of the Chakma tribals, the Farakka Barrage and river water disputes; and India attempts to "repatriate" from Assam illegal "Bangladeshi" Muslim

migrants and to build a protective fence along portions of the border. None of these, except temporarily the Farakka Barrage issue, were solved."

Again and again, then Bangladesh came up against what it was India "Pressure". The issues themselves – except perhaps the river waters were – it regarded as trivial. Dhaka's view was that India could, virtually not cost, meet Bangladesh concerns on all of them. New Delhi's reluctance to do so was seen as arising from its desire to use these issues as pressure protagonist to punish Bangladesh for its lack of "gratitude", destabilize its governments, limit its autonomy in respect of foreign and domestic policy, and enforce a regional order under India "hegemony". Thus, for Bangladesh, as for the other South Asian states, India was the primary "internal" and "external" threat.

To deal with the Indian threat, Bangladesh, like the other states in the region, sought extra – original "balancing" against New Delhi – the United States, China, Pakistan, and the Islamic states. However, none of these was particularly "reliable".⁵¹

Border Problem

It was in 1974, that the Delhi Agreement was reached between India and Bangladesh and the problem of ex gravis was solved. However, in the post Mujib era, the Government of Bangladesh once again tried to activate the border problem with India. It was along the Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam borders that Bangladesh Rifles resorted to firing first in April 1976. In April 1976 and then in November 1976. In April 1976, the border out-post at Dumkura, in the Garo Hills district at Meghalaya was fired upon by the Bangladesh Rifles. In November, 1976, the Bangladesh authorities claimed an Indian area measuring about 8 hectares in the Muhuri char area in the Belonia sub-division of Tripura. It became the object of dispute between India and Bangladesh and the crisis became deeper when the Bangladesh Rifles repeatedly opened fire upon the Indian farmers. The demarcation of border along Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya had been pending issue because of certain changes in the course of Muhuri river. To sort out the matter, the first of talks between Bangladesh Rifles and Indian Border Security Force representatives was held at Comilla on 11 November 1976, but there could be reached no agreement. Each side

then blamed the other for talking rigid and unreasonable stand. Bangladesh accused India of having unilaterally constructed nine spurs for deflecting the course of Muhuri river. The allegation was related by India. A second round of talks was held in Dacca on November 19, and both the sides agreed to prevent the recurrence of border incidents. After a meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission in Dacca, it was declared on November 20 that both sides have tried to understand each other's view point regarding the border near Muhuri Charland and that both sides have agreed to take steps for removing the irritants. A Committee for river site and for determining the issues of spurs was instituted. This was a welcome move but the net result negligible because on November 22, Bangladesh Rifles again resumed firing in this sector. The civil defence exercised and the hectic activity on the Bangladesh side of the border further made the issue more complicated. To defuse the situation, 6 member Bangladesh delegation came to India on December 12 and held discussion with the counterpart over the issue of difference over border demarcation as stipulated in the 1974 Boundary Agreement. The talks again failed to produce any tangible result. The Bangladesh delegation refused to accept the steps listed by India for normalizing the situation on Tripura-Bangladesh border. It demanded that the whole of Muhuri Char area should be made a 'no man's land' with the provision for joint patrolling on the Indian side by Indian and Bangladesh border forces. This was an indirect way of inducing a change in the 1974 Agreement and hence it was rejected by India. The talks produced only one small agreement where by both sides agreed to maintain normally in the Muhuri char area.

In February 1980, Secretary level meetings between India and Bangladesh were held in Dacca for resolving the issue. The talks, however, ended after just friking a Of optimism for future course of India-Bangladesh relations.

The economic and trade agreement which had been signed during 1972-75 period did not succeed in reaping a rich harvest in the form of increased and diversified trade between India and Bangladesh. The complimentary nature of their economics, geographical contiguity and the trade agreements as well as Indo Bangladesh Treaty could not lead to the expected vital and close economic and trade links between the two countries because of the existence of certain problems

and irritants. Even the switch over from barter to free convertible currency dealings failed to produce the desired results. The political instability in Bangladesh after August 1975 coup and the consequent emergence of strong anti-India propaganda in Bangladesh, created a situation in which both the countries found it difficult to capitalize through mutual trade and economic links. Nevertheless, the two sides kept on trying to maintain and improve mutual trade and economic cooperation

Controversy over the New Moore Island

Towards the middle of 1981, Indo-Bangladesh relations developed serious strains over the issue of occupation and ownership of the New Moore Island or the South Talpatty as Bangladesh calls it born in 1970, with barely 1.5 sq. in area, the New Moore Island became a major matter of dispute between India and Bangladesh. So much so that in May 1981, there appeared a danger of armed naval clash between the two countries. Before 1970, this land-mass was nothing more than a low tide elevation which became visible only when the sea subsided during a low tide. It surfaced in an effective was only in 1970.

The Island has great economic implications and its ownership involves various maritime and other territorial rights over about 4000 sq. nautical miles of the sea. The possibility of using the land mass and sea around the New Moore Island for securing sea food, mineral resources and natural gas makes the Island very important in the eyes of India and Bangladesh.

Indian cage regarding the ownership and sovereignty over the Island is clear and supported by facts. It has been in possession of New Moore ever since 1970. The Island lies at a distance of barely 5.2 km from the nearest Indian landmass as against 7.6 km from the nearest land-mass of Bangladesh. As such it is relatively close to India than Bangladesh.

The Indian Navy made an early survey of the Island and erected identification pillars on it in 1974 in accordance with international practice. India further notifies the British Adminality and the U.S.navy about the existence of Island and its Indian ownership.

The New Moore Island continues to be an issue in Indo-Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh continues to base its claim for ownership over the island on the basis of

the satellite map. India is equally clear and forthright in asserting its claim which is based upon 3 main foundations : (i) that New Moore Island is closer to Indian land mass; (ii) That the main channel of the Hariabhanga on the estuary flows along the eastern side of the island and not the western, side as claimed by Dacca; (iii) That India owns the island since its birth in 1970.⁵²

The differences between India and Bangladesh over the Chakma refugees from the Chittagong hill tracts provide another example of problems caused by trans-border migrations. The disturbances in the Indian state of Assam due to the influx of people from Bangladesh over a period of time also illustrate the same point. The reactions of the people in Pakistan to the out break of communal riots in India, which is unfortunately not infrequent, and the resentment caused by them in the Indian political circles are of course, in a class apart. But this also shows that cultural affinity is not always conducive to cordiality in inter-state relationships.

As Dr. Shaukat Hassan has pointed out the sole ethnic problem in Bangladesh is that between the Chakmas, a hill tribe inhabiting the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), and the Government of Bangladesh. The problem was partly one of cultural divergence — the Chakmas were not only overwhelmingly Buddhist, speaking non-Bengali dialects and, with their Mongoloid features looking ethnically distinct from the Bengali Muslims. But also, during colonial times, the British had left these tribal people more or less to themselves except for purposes of revenue collection. The request of the (HT) People's Association, at the time of partition that they be included in India rather than Pakistan was rejected by the Radcliffe Commission.⁵⁴ and the CHT lost its status as an excluded area.

The Pakistan government's policy was to encourage actively the settlement of outsiders was adopted by Bangladesh when Mujiber Rahman's secular commitment gave way to increasing Islamisation of the State, particularly after the time of Ziaur Rahman. While the proportion of tribal people to outsiders was 91 percent to 9 percent in 1951, the ratio had dropped to 67.1 percent and 35.9 percent by 1980.⁵⁵ The Chakma insurgency developed not only due to these enforced demographic changes. Development projects carried out by the government in the area did not benefit the tribal people; on the contrary, they interfered with traditional occupations, such as jhum (China farming). The construction of the

Karnaphuli (Kaptai) hydro-electric project in 1962, for example submerged 54,000 acres of settle cultivable land affecting about 100,000 people, 90 percent of whom were Chakmas.⁵⁶

The insurgency was dormant in Bangladesh's early years, but already in 1972 the Hill Tracts People's solidarity Association (PCJSS or Parbattya Chattegram Jana Sangheta Samiti) had been formed, and in 1975 it had a militant wing called Shanti Bahini with a reported strength of 15,000 members.⁵⁷ By 1978, the Chakma insurgency had become a major problem for Bangladesh and allegations were already being made that the Shanti Bahini had the support of India as well as the Soviet Union. The influx, in increasing numbers, of Chakma-insurgents into India did create problems for the latter, too, and the charge that India was encouraging and supporting the insurgency must remain speculative. Partha Ghosh has this to say on this point.

India's involvement with the Chakma, can only be inferred through circumstantial evidence. The Mizo Insurgency that India faced till recently offers a clue, considering the distrust that existed between the Mizo tribe and the Chakma tribe. At the time when relations were cordial between the Mujib regime and the Indian government, there was co-operation between the two governments to jointly put down the insurgencies. Mujib had secretly allowed the Indian army to operate in the jungles of the CHT to fight the MNF (Milo) guerillas. In the process they also took on the Razakars members of the pro-Pakistani para-military force who also received support from the Chakma insurgents, which was to Mujib's advantage. In the post Mujib phase, distrust developed between the two governments and India accused Bangladesh of assisting Mizo rebels. The counter accusation that India was sympathetic to, if not actively cooperating with the CHT insurgents is plausible, though it cannot be substantiated.⁵⁸

Perhaps the most sensitive issue confronting contemporary Indo-Bangladesh relations relates to the alleged illegal migration of Bangladeshis to the Indian State of Assam, and quite a different problem concerning a two-way process of migration which has involved Chakma insurgents seeking refuge from their habitat in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to the Indian state of Tripura, and conversely, the erstwhile Mizo insurgents seeking refuge in Bangladesh; with each country conniving and

supporting the insurgencies in the other country. Since the Mizo problem in India has now been resolved within the framework of a new state of Mizoram, we shall deal here essentially with the Chakma problem, mainly in terms of its fall-out on Indo-Bangladesh relations.⁵⁹

Another major irritant in the Indo-Bangladesh relations of post 1975 era continues to be the dispute over Farakka.

The Indo-Bangladesh task over the question of ways to argument the flow of Ganga, however, got deadlocked because of a big difference in the approach and ideas of the two countries whereas Bangladesh wanted to against the flow of Ganga during lean season by using water stored in serious which were to be constructed in Nepal, Himalayas. India advocated the construction of Brahmaputra – Ganga link canal for achieving the desired goal. Further, whereas Bangladesh wanted to involve Nepal in negotiations over Farakka. India wanted to settle the issue bilaterally.

From that day till today, the dispute over Farakka continues to be irritant in the Indo-Bangladesh relations. The Interim Agreement of 1975 failed to be a basis for future settlement of dispute. In fact, it was a patch-work which could neither satisfy the objective of security the health of Calcutta Port nor could meet the irrigation needs of the two countries. The agreement was signed with the united or objective of enabling the running of Feeder Canal till the determination of allocation of the minimum flow of Ganga during the lean months.

In the Post-Mujib era, the atmosphere for further talks in Farakka became vitated because of the Bangladesh Press which included the demand for a prior approval by Bangladesh of any water that India wanted to withdraw from Farakka. In February 1976, when India sent an official proposal to Dacca for discussions of the lean month discharges from Farakka, Dacca came out with the view that all such talks are bound to be meaningless so long as India continues to unilaterally withdraw Ganga waters at Farakka. Along with such a stand, Bangladesh started highlighting the alleged ill effects of such withdrawals on the irrigation, economic and industrial needs of the country. It even tried to internationalise the issue. Later on, Dacca realized the importance of bilateral talks on Farakka and the two rounds of talks

between the officials of the two countries took place in April and May 1976. It was agreed that the two teams would jointly observe the effect of Farakka Barrage and its Feeder Canal at Haldia and Farakka. However, the opposition parties of Bangladesh in general and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani's Awami Party in particular, started a vicious tirade against India on the Farakka issue. At one time Maulana Bhashani threatened to cross the borders, ghereaos Farakka and stop its functioning. This threat could not materialise because of a strong Indian stand and Mrs. Indira Gandhi's firm declaration that "India was willing to discuss and settle the Farakka issue peacefully and any attempt to solve it through threats and agitations shall be harmful and counter productive." The March to Farakka, as organized by Maulana Bhashani, was abandoned at Sibganj, about 5k. from Indian border of Malda. In May, 1976, General Zia-ur-Rahman, while participating in the Islamic Ministers Conference at Islamabad, called upon the Muslim countries to support Bangladesh on the Farakka issue. In August 1976, again an attempt was made to raise this issue at the Colombo Summit of the Non-aligned nations.

In the first week of September, 1976, India sent an invitation to Bangladesh for holding bilateral negotiations on Farakka. Along with it, India declared that there were to be no preconditions and negotiations were to be conducted with an open mind. The invitation was accepted by Bangladesh and Indo-Bangla talks on Farakka opened on September 8, 1976.

India, therefore, asked the U.N. to support bilateral efforts for reaching a solution to this problem.

Farakka issue, however, continued to be, the major problem of Indo-Bangladesh relations. It is hoped that the two countries would be successful in resolving the issue through mutual efforts. The commitment to keep up and strengthen further the friendly cooperation between the two countries provide a good basis for this prophecy.⁶⁰

Conclusion

It is true that India did not show the same 'generosity' towards its neighbour all the time on setting all the bilateral issues. India too had its national interests - no

more, no less than those of its neighbours. But India always trying to resolve the disputes amicably within the bilateral framework.

The trend in India's neighbourhood policy suggests us to conclude that a neighbour can achieve concessions from India on the spirit of friendship if it approaches the bilateral problems in a friendly way, India will not be amenable to the pressure tactics of any neighbouring country. At the same time, India is not prepared to compromise on its national interests for the sake of good neighbourly relations. A good illustration of this point to India's blank refusal to yield to Bangladeshi's opposition to India fencing its long border with that country because of tremendous illegal immigration from it.

India's policy towards its neighbours was also dictated by India's considerations for stability, peace and order among the neighbours. Any disturbances among the latter (especially having security implications) would tend to distract Indian attention from its overwhelming preoccupation internal political and economic progress.

Despite India's comparatively large and strong defence forces they had no relevance to India's security relations with its neighbours excepting Pakistan (and China outside the Indian sub-continent). India has consistently insisted on political solutions to all disputes with its neighbours. This is a noteworthy point, because particularly in academic writings and intellectual discussions in the neighbouring countries, the fact of India's more size and its large defence forces are insinuated as threatening the security of all smaller neighbour. After all, Indian armed forces have been used outside India only at the request by other nations (or the United Nations) or in self-defence.⁶¹

Indo – SriLanka Relations

In South Asia, as well as other regions, internal political economic and social processes within countries are seen to affect the nature of relationship between than at both bilateral and regional levels. Therefore, various conflicts within the countries of South Asia "generate internal pulls and pressures which effect inter-state relations within the region."⁶²

Among the Bilateral relationship India as with its neighbours, the domestic factor is the most pronounced in the case of Sri Lanka. The ethnic composition of the island is such that not only does a sizeable minority there claim its origin in India (ironically, even the majority is of Indian origin), it also looks upon India as its potential saviour. On its part India can't afford to ignore the problems of this minority because of the co-ethnics in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The government in New Delhi has to take cognizance of the Tamil emotionally charged chauvinistic concern for the said minority for political reasons of its own. India-Sri Lanka relations thus have been caught in a complex web of domestic politics from which neither nation is able to extricate itself. The strategic cleavage that has developed between them is also largely an offshoot of this essentially domestic conflict.

India's policy towards Sri Lanka from the time of their independence to the present, may be divided broadly into two phases. The first phase lasted virtually three decades, from the 1950s through the 1970s, when India was primarily concerned with the problem of Indian Tamils. Although the problem was never solved, in the 1980, it was overshadowed by the ethnic conflict between the majority Sinhales and the minority Sri Lanka Tamils. Since the problem had serious international ramifications, more so for India-Sri Lanka relations, India became deeply involved in it.⁶³

Hence, the deteriorating ethnic conflict has been a major problem inhibiting relations between India and Sri Lanka from 1983 onwards.⁶⁴

By the early 1980s when the issue of Indian Tamils seemed to have become virtually dormant and both India and Sri Lanka appeared to have reconciled themselves to living with a unresolved yet not so critical problem, there was serious deterioration in ethnic relations between the Sinhales and the Sri Lanka Tamils. The new phase began with the outbreak of anti-Tamil riots in Colombo in July, 1983. The riots drew international attention. An essentially internal problem of Sri Lanka became internationalised with India developing a major role in its solution. India's involvement in the Tamil problem has had domestic and external dimensions ever since both countries became independent but in recent years there have been significant changes in the latter making it almost impossible for the Sri Lanka authorities to deal with its ethnic problem purely as an internal affair. The changes

in the global strategic environment, an ever-growing militarisation of the Indian Ocean region in particular, have also contributed to this shift. Domestically speaking the concurrents of Tamil Nadu politics have influenced New Delhi's position vis-à-vis Sri Lanka's ethnic policy.⁶⁵

In respect of Sri Lanka, Indian Foreign Policy has always been governed by the desire to assure Sri Lanka that India fully respects the sovereignty and integrity of Sri Lanka. Moreover India is keen to cement the traditional, cultural and trade ties by taking concrete steps towards the development of a more meaningful friendship and fruitful cooperation between the two countries.

Prime Ministers Nehru, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi took keen interest to maintain peace and friendship with Sri Lanka. So also the DMK and A.J.A.D.M.K. governments Tamilnadu took sympathetic attitude towards Sri Lanka. In short the Indian leaders have always been at pains to assure Sri Lanka that India fully accepts and respects the sovereign equality of Sri Lanka and its state as an important and equal member of the community of Nation.

Both the Sinhalese and Tamilians, who constitute respectively the 70 percent and 12 percent of Sri Lanka's total population accept their traditional links with India. The Sinhalese accept themselves as the descendents of the Dravidians of South India. The Sinhalese language bears the influence of Hindi. Similarly the Tamilians speak Tamil the language of a large number of Indians living in the South. Buddhism was introduced in Sri Lanka by India and even till today it continues to be the religion of the majority of the people of Sri Lanka. The National Day celebrations of Sri Lanka commence with a religious ceremony at Sri Mahabodhi, the sacred tree that was grown from a sapling from the Bodhi tree brought in the third centuries from Bodhi Gaya in North India. Such cultural links between the people of the two countries have been a source of strength and have helped them to better understand and adjust with each other.

The similarities in the foreign policy of the two countries again constitute a helping and positive factor in Indo-Sri Lanka relations.

Both have, over the past 38 years forged important economic, trade, industrial communication and cultural links.

Both have successfully resolved the issue of demarcation of the Maritime Boundary and ownership of Kachhativu island in a spirit of mutual reconciliation and adjustment.

Both the countries have a similar perception about the desired status of Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

The peaceful way in which both the countries reached agreements for repatriation of the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, also has been a source of satisfaction. Both have willingly showed their respective responsibilities towards the decision regarding the status of the stateless persons in Sri Lanka.

Both are committed to Non-alignment; both have firm faith in Panchsheela both are opposed to colonialism and radicalism.

The following factors and disputes have been the source of fear, suspicion and tension in Indo-Sri Lankan relations during the past 45 years.

- i. Sri Lanka's fear of India and the complex that being a small country its interests and security is bound to be dependent upon the interests and policy objectives of India, has been a hindering factor in Indo-Sri Lankan relations.
- ii. The slow progress towards the implementation of agreement regarding the repatriation and settlement of people of Indian origin and the recent differences over the fate of the previous agreement over this issue, has been another hindering factor in Indo-Sri Lankan relations.
- iii. India believes that it has the right and the need to develop under technology for peaceful purpose and as such is opposed to the non-proliferation treaty(NPT).India conducted its first PNT in May 1974 and holds that it necessary it shall conduct more such explain for implementing the peaceful nuclear energy utilization programme which is essential for promoting the prosperity and welfare of its people. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, feels otherwise and wants that India should sign the NPT. It did not look with favour the

1974 peaceful nuclear explosion conducted by India. Much to the dislike of India, Sri Lanka currently even supports the Pakistani demand for making South Asia nuclear free zone.

- iv. The existence of subversive elements in Sri Lanka ; which became active at times, to demand autonomy/statehood for certain areas which are inhabited by minorities, has been a source of irritation in Indo-Sri Lankan relations because a section of the people of Sri Lanka, consisting of mostly Sinhalese and the members of ruling elite, feels that the insurgents and terrorists operating in their country have their roots and bases in India.
- v. Sri Lanka was on the first few countries who supported the demand for making the Indian ocean a zone of peace. At the moment Sri Lanka, however, appears to be a little hesitant in making determined efforts for securing this objective. Behind this lack of efforts on its part is the fear that countries like India, and even China, would try to fill the power vacuum after the elimination of super power naval presence in the Indian ocean. Sri Lanka, therefore, wants that the declaration of Indian ocean as a zone of peace must also involve a commitment from the littoral states that none of them would increase its naval presence and strength in the area of Indian ocean.
- vi. The desire of Sri Lanka to play safe and keep at a safe distance from both India and China has also been a hindering factor in Indo-Sri Lanka relations. In the sixties, Sri Lanka even tried secure friendship with China as a counterpoise to India. These negative factors have been responsible for the slow progress of Indo-Sri Lankan cooperation in various spheres. At times, there had been factors responsible for generating tension and stratus for Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

While commenting upon the history of Indo-Sri Lanka relations, Dr. S.C.Gangal in his article 'Indo-Lanka Ties Ambivalent (The Tribune, 3 July 1982)

writes : "Indeed during the last 30 years Indo-Sri Lanka relationship has been marked by a sort of ambivalence – an alteration between warmness, goodwill and cooperation on the one hand and fear suspicion and political and territorial disputes on the other. "Such a conclusion is fully supported by the facts of Indo-Sri Lanka relations since 1948.

A study of the history of relations between these two South Asian States, which have strong cultural links between them, reveal that on the one hand they have been successful in reaching agreements and resolving disputes through peaceful negotiations and in the spirit of mutual accommodation but on the other hand there has been continuously present a sense of fear, suspicion and political problems and disputes between them. Even after 68 years of peaceful, friendly and cooperative living as India's South Asian neighbour, Sri Lanka continues to regard India as a critical factor in the South Asian regional power system and as a potential power which can inflict at will any harm to the security and other interest of Sri Lanka.

The recent tensions over the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka have once again made Indo-Sri Lanka relations somewhat strained and tense. The Colombo outburst against Indian nationals and property during the July, 1983, riots, once again brought chilling winds for the bilateral relations of the two countries. Since her independence, Sri Lanka has been in search of a counterpoise which can match or neutralize the growing power of India as a major power in South Asia. It continues to fear India as a state which can harm or limit the freedom of action and choice of Sri Lanka. It is on record that Mr. Jayawardane, the President of Sri Lanka once remarked : "If some tyrant should get hold of India and wants to invade Ceylon, nothing on the earth is going to stop the invasion." Undoubtedly it is a conditional statement, yet it clearly reveals that Sri Lanka accepts the possibility of an invasion by India. This factor, along with many other differences over the two of stateless persons of Indian origin, the issue of alleged Indian support for Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka, the nature of Indian Ocean a peace zone and the issue of trade imbalances between the two countries, continue to be the sources of suspicion, tensions and strains in Indo-Sri Lanka relations. However, the existence of traditional links, similarities in policies and the realization to the need of each other's

help and support have been a source of strength which has helped the two countries to resolve the conflict of a number of issues – peacefully and through bilateral agreements. The step initiated by Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi for allaying Sri Lankan fears and for stepping up of Indo-Sri Lanka cooperation. During the past 38 years, the two countries have been successful in securing some important and major agreements which have been a source of big satisfaction for the two countries.⁶⁶

Gradually, with Rajiv Gandhi replacing his mother as India's Prime Minister upon her assassination, Indo-Sri Lanka relations showed definite signs of improvement.

Sri Lanka's fear of 'Indian expansionism', the complex regarding the small population and size of Sri Lanka as compared with India, the existence of the minority profession in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's fear regarding the emergence of communist movement in South India, the suspicions regarding the demand for a separate state by the DMK of India, and differences over the issue of citizenship of the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, further prevented the growth of Indo-Sri Lanka relationship.

In 1965, political environment in Sri Lanka again underwent a change when Dull Dudley Senanayaka formed a National Government in Sri Lanka. This change also proved more helpful to India because in his bid to check the Sri Lankan tilt towards China, as appeared during Srimava's regime. Mr. Senanayaka decided to improve relations, not only with the West but also with India. Similarly, during the second tenure of Srimavo as the Prime Minister in the United Front Government in Sri Lanka important and meaningful efforts were made by both sides to maintain and develop the bilateral relations between India-Sri Lanka. The efforts produced agreement on Boundary Demarcation and Kadshativu island, India-Sri Lanka parts on the issue of the citizenship and repatriation of stateless people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, led to the strengthening of bilateral trade and economic links. This healthy trend continued till recently. In fact, with the emergence of J.R. Jayawardhana (UNP) as the leader of Government in Sri Lanka there appeared a welcome change in the psychological environment that governed the relations between India and Sri Lanka. These appeared even a mature understanding between the leaders of the

two countries and they started maintaining high level contacts for improving Indo-Sri Lanka cooperation in various spheres. No doubt, there continued to be differences over such issues as Indo-Sri Lanka problem. Trade imbalances and Balance of Payment problem, but through a better understanding of each others view point India and Sri Lanka always tried to resolve these problems. The level of understanding between New Delhi and Colombo that has been increased after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhis initiative and his June 1985 Summit meeting with President Jayawardene, can surely help the two countries to resolve their differences, and to build up a stronger and matured friendly cooperation between the two countries.

But there are some major issues and problems between this two countries. These are :

The Island Problem

Along with this issue, the question of ownership over the Kachhativu island became a hot issue between the two countries.

The Dialogue and the Agreement

Both India and Sri Lanka claimed the island on the basis of the historical links, records and the location of the island.

Maritime Boundary Agreements of 1974 and 1976 :

On 28th June, 1974, the international boundary between Indian and Sri Lanka in their historical waters in Pak Strait and Palk Bay was demarcated and the issue of overlap in the territorial seas of the two countries in this region was resolved. It placed Kachhativu on the Sri Lankan side of the boundary. A boundary line was drawn falling one mile off the west coast of Kachhativu. An important adjunct of this agreement was that each country was to be free to explore and exploit all petroleum and mineral deposits lying on its side of boundary, provision being made by the two countries to agree on the most effective method of exploration where petroleum or mineral deposits were found to extend from one side of the boundary to the other. "This agreement was made keeping an eye on Indo-Sri Lanka

relations in the eighties particularly in the context of India's recent oil strike in this region."

Issue of Citizenship

The issue of citizenship of the stateless persons has been a major thorny irritant in Indo-Sri Lanka relations.

Indo-Sri Lanka Accord on Stateless Persons in Sri Lanka

On January 16, 1986, India and Sri Lanka agreed to resolve, once for all, the problems of stateless persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. It was agreed that India will proceed with the process of conferring citizenship on 85,000 people of Indian origin who applied for Indian citizenship prior to October 30, 1981, and Sri Lanka will simultaneously take necessary legislative and executive action to grant Sri Lankan citizenship to all the remaining personages of Indian origin, estimated to be 4,69,000 and their natural increase, including those who have already been given Sri Lankan citizenship. This agreement has finally clinched the issue of stateless persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka.

Because of these differences, Indo-Sri Lanka problem continues to be a big problem. The recent controversy regarding India expression of concern for the Tamils of Sri Lanka, has further affected the environment of Indo-Sri Lanka relations. It is bound to give a setback to the efforts to settle the thorny issue of stateless persons. India expressed its concern with the fate of Tamils, purely on humanitarian ground and did not in any way wish to interfere with the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka and the press there has played this up for diverting the attention of the people from the grim domestic situation. The Tribune in its editorial : A Needless Irritant (25 July 1983) observed, "Sri Lanka is making a mountain of a malchill by its "over reaction" to Indian Government's mildly expressed concern for the safety of the people of Indian Origin. "This development has further made the Indo-Sri Lanka problem more difficult. A few months ago President Jayawardene declared that his Government was considering the grant of 'civic rights' to stateless, but the Sinhalese pressure and the recent development in Sri Lanka have prevented him from taking any effective steps. The problem as much is bound to remain an irritant in Indo-Sri Lanka relations in the coming year.

However, since both the countries are committed to settle all their problems and disputes peacefully and through bilateral efforts, it is hoped that the two countries would continue to work for securing a mutually acceptable solution to this issue.

The economic aspect of Indo-Sri Lanka relations is an important and significant aspect. India has been one of Sri Lanka's largest trading partners, but the trade relations have not been always very smooth. The unpopularity of Indian businessmen and money lenders in Sri Lanka and the trade deficit and imbalances have been the major irritants. The similar export interests, as both the countries are engaged in the export of tea, coconut and rubber, have tended to make the two countries trade value in the world markets. Further, being a better developed and technologically advanced countries. India can export many things to Sri Lanka. Even today, it accounts for 10 percent of Sri Lanka's total imports. As against this Sri Lanka has very limited export potential and as such cannot sell much to India. The net result has been a trade imbalance between India and Sri Lanka.

Both the countries have been trying to restore the trade balance, but their efforts have failed to click positively. There exists a strong need for giving a face lift to Indo-Sri Lanka trade relations. India being a bigger and better developed country must take effective steps for developing trade with Sri Lanka and for restoring the balance. Joint Industrial ventures on a buy-back basis, expansion of mutual trade and export sales to third countries, further utilization of the existing facilities in the various fields of industrial and agricultural development corporation and tourism etc., can be some of the measures which can help the achievement of the objective. Dr. Urmila Phadnis in one of her articles in India and Sri Lanka relations has suggested: "India's Sri Lanka policy should necessarily comprise and policies to stimulate trade not only with India but also in the Asian region. It should provide for economic linkage between the two countries that would make for the maximum utilization of resource endowments to the two countries. India should also take steps for liberalizing the imports from Sri Lanka." There exists a strong need for strengthening Indo-Sri Lanka trade relations.

Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace

Besides these major issues reference must also be made to certain other issues which have been influencing the course of Indo-Sri Lanka relations. Both the countries are committed to secure Indian ocean as a Zone of Peace (IDPZ Indian Ocean Peace Zone). Sri Lanka was one of the first few countries who took the initiative in demanding both in the meetings of the non-aligned countries and in the United Nations that the Indian Ocean should be made a zone of peace. However, since early 1980s it has been advocating that after the securing of IDPZ, no littoral state should increase its naval presence in the area. Apparently this demand has its roots in the 'Fear of India' with which Sri Lanka has been living since its independence. Sri Lanka wants that after securing IOPZ no littoral state of Indian Ocean should increase its presence in this area. India stands committed to the objective of securing IOPZ, but is not willing to undertake any commitment involving the future security interests of India. It wants an unconditional acceptance of IOPZ and the liquidation of super power military bases in the Indian Ocean. India wants Sri Lanka to collaborate fully for securing this objective. But Sri Lanka now appears to be not very enthusiastic about IOPZ.

The Tamil problem in Sri Lanka constitutes the biggest irritant in the contemporary phase of Indo-Sri Lankan relations. It is an internal problem of Sri Lanka but it has been source of big strains on Indo-Sri Lankan relations because of socio-political and geographic conditions that constitute the environment of the relations between these two countries. The Indian concern for Sri Lankan Tamils and Sri Lanka's allergy to the issues have been the two main factors which are conditioning the bilateral interactions during the current phase of their relations.

On July 29, 1987, India and Sri Lanka signed a historic pact which heralded a new era of their bilateral relations. It constituted a bold attempt on the part of both the countries to adopt a cooperative approach not only in regard to the limited issue of resolving the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka but also with regard to all round relations between the two countries. The pact was described by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi as "big and unusual as such an accord for mutual and collective benefit has been signed perhaps for the first time in the history of international relations."

The Peace Pact

"Affecting utmost importance to nurturing intensifying the strengthening of traditional friendship of India and Sri Lanka, and acknowledging the imperative need of resolving the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka and the consequent violence and for the safety, well being and prosperity of people belonging to all communities i.e. Sri Lanka have this day entered into the following agreement to fulfill this objective...."

The pact-reaffirmed a faith in a unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity, multi-ethnic and a multilingual plural society of Sri Lanka and recognized that each ethnic group has a distinct cultural and linguistic identity which is to be carefully nurtured. It averted the need for organizing the adjoining provinces to join to form one administrative unit with the exception. Of those areas whose people may, through referendum, decide to remain out an separate unity. It enumerated in detail the provision for holding the referendum for the constitution of provincial councils. It was further agreed that the Emerging in Jaffna area shall be lifted by August 15, 1987.

A very striking feature of the pact was the provision that the Government of Indian will underwrite and guranteed the accord and cooperate in the implementation of its provision ... The role of India forward the implementation of the accord was described as under :

- (A) India will take all necessary steps to ensure that Indian territory is not used for activities projudical to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka.
- (B) The Indian Navy/Coast Guards will cooperate with the Sri Lankan navy in preventing Tamil militant activity from affecting Sri Lanka.
- (C) In the event that the Government of Sri Lanka requests the Government of India to afford military assistance to implement these proposals, the Government of India will cooperate by giving to the Government of Sri Lanka such military assistance as and when requested.

- (D) The Government of India will expedite repatriation from Sri Lanka of Indian citizens to India who are resident there concurrently with the repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from Tamil Nadu.
- (E) The Government of India and Sri Lanka will cooperate in ensuring the physical security and safety of all communities inhabiting the northern and eastern provinces.

These clauses made it the responsibility of India to ensure the implementation of the pact.

Further, it was agreed that a cessation of hostilities will come into force all over the island within 24 hours of the signing of this pact. All arms held by the militants will be surrendered. The process of surrendering of arms and confining of security personnel to the barracks will be completed within 72 hours of cessation of hostilities.

Praising the provisions of the accord Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi described it as momentous event in the history of the two countries "it heralds peace. It is a compact in the cause of brotherhood. It promised national reconstitution in Sri Lanka. It has created conditioning for the return of refugees. It has dispelled the clouds that had hovered over the relationship between India and Sri Lanka. Every agreement is an act of faith. Triumph needs unremitting toll and unflinching determination. In democracies, critics are often more vocal than supporters. It is up to us to defend this agreement and bring round its detractors."⁶⁷

Although one cannot predict in definite terms what course Indo-Sri Lankan relations will follow but from the perspective of domestic politics it can be said that the future prospects for good neighbourliness are not bright. The Indo-Sri Lankan accord has failed in two important respects. It has failed to project India as a nation committed to respect its small neighbour's national sensitivities which, in the long run is bound to boomerang against India. And it has not so far been able to work out a lasting solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis on which a major component of Indo-Sri Lankan relating is critically dependent.⁶⁸

However, it appears that the SAARC can be a meaningful option for Sri Lanka. It is more realistic for Sri Lanka to cultivate regional cooperation with

neighbours than seek allies elsewhere for survival and sustenance. Sri Lanka should however realize that it would be in its interest to develop friendly relations with India; and it must see the utility of the SAARC in this context. SAARC can be of immense help to Sri Lanka in the economic sphere. For instance, it along with India and Bangladesh, can regulate the international price of tea through the forum of SAARC. Simultaneously, Sri Lanka could benefit more by cooperation with India in the coconut, coconut oil, coffee and jewels markets. Diplomatically too, Sri Lanka has much to gain from taking an active part in fostering closer cooperation among the South Asian countries.⁷⁰ The recent experiences (regarding Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 29 July, 1987) should make the Sri Lankan policy makers prudent enough to understand this reality and adjust the country's foreign policy accordingly. However, it appears that Sri Lanka has not given sufficient cognizance to the possibilities of economic cooperation through the SAARC forum.

From the above analysis, it can be assessed that the Indo-Lankan Accord was a positive development in the bilateral realizations which guaranteed the security and stability of Sri Lanka. In this context, the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord was a positive development for India, as it assured an active and responsible Indian role in the Sri Lankan affairs.⁷¹

Consequent to the bilateral relations, India had to support the legitimate interests of the Tamils in Sri Lanka within the framework of Sri Lankan unity and territorial integrity. In pursuing these objectives, Indian approach and moves were conditioned by the developments in Sri Lanka's ethnic situation and the Sri Lankan government's foreign and defence policy initiatives and moves. In this context, the Indo-Lanka Accord was the high point of bilateral understanding and cooperation between the two countries. In the final analysis, the role of India in the Sri Lankan conflict, despite some lapses and migrations has been one of the constructive engagement. It shows a close link between Indian willingness to guarantee the peace and security of Sri Lanka in return for the accommodation of its security concerns. In this direction the Indo-Lankan Accord has served its security concern and also as a step towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict.⁷²

To conclude, it can be said that unless and until the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka is resolved, its attitude towards the SAARC would remain confined to the

problem of security, particularly keeping in view its own problem of terrorism. Although the economic issues could have been more beneficial, Sri Lanka would not give importance to this because of its own domestic political problems.

Sri Lanka can also benefit or save a lot of hard currency by establishing many industries in the island with Indian collaboration and in such areas as electrical goods and agro-industries, tea canteen, sugar, cement and paper plants, rice mills, cycle industries, garment fabrication, railway. Coach factories, nylon, rubber and plastic goods industries. The items are imported by Sri Lanka from outside countries with high language traffic. In this regard, India has an exportable technological knowledge and productive capacity and Sri Lanka has enough raw material. These, joint efforts in trade and commerce may be beneficial to both the country and helpful in strengthening South Asian Regional Cooperation. But as started earlier, Sri Lanka's domestic political problems do not allow it at the moment to focus on these dimensions of regional cooperation, as it has perceived security and terrorism on the more important issues. Nevertheless, once the ethnic problem is solved and peace and stability maintains in the Island, it is expected to exploit the possibilities to expand economic cooperation of the regional level under one auspices of the SAARC.⁷³

India – Nepal Relations

According to Dr. M.S. Rajan, "In language and religion, goods and goodesses, food and clothing the two countries, India and Nepal, have more in common with each other than with any third country of the world." The observation rightly reflects the strong bonds that bind India and Nepal. Both have been a war between them. Since its Independence, India has always been very keen to maintain and develop further, the friendship and cooperation with Nepal.

India and Nepal are tied by the silken bonds of geography, history and culture. Together they constitute the those determinates or more realistically speaking, the conditioning factors of Indo-Nepalese relations.

Geographically, the two countries inevitably form one geographic unit. Each one can be regarded as a territorial extension of the other depending upon

whether one surveys the subcontinent from the mountain end or the sea end. With the existence of an open boundary between them, the people of the countries have developed almost a shared living in the border areas.

Historically, the two countries originated from the same source. Ruling dynasties of one have mingled with those of the other and have even ruled areas which now fall within the bonds of the other. In the past, people of one country migrated to the other either in search of livelihood or business or on a spiritual quest.

For the two countries, the geographical contiguity and common historical past have given rise to a similar culture. "In language and religion, gods and goddesses, food and clothing, writer M.S. Rajan two countries have more in common with each other than with any third country of the world."

Indeed the above three factors have been a source of strength and gratification for India-Nepalese relations. Both the countries have always accepted the need to develop friendship and cooperation on the basis of these links and the similarities in the goals of their national interests. Both accept that the security of one is linked with the strength and stability of the other. For India, Nepal's strength, stability, progress and friendship together constitute an essential healthy condition for its national interests in South Asia. Particularly after 1962, India has come to realize the importance of Nepal for the security of India's northern border. The Chinese occupation of Tibet and the continued Chinese aggression of Indian borders have made India realize the importance of Nepal as a frontline buffer state. India has an open border with Nepal and the latter's northern border runs along the Tibetan frontier, therefore, if Nepal falls under the influence of China or any inimical power, Indian security would get exposed to dangers. It is in this respect that Nepal occupies an important strategic position in India's security system. India has an eye over Nepal. What India wants is the stability of Nepal as a non-aligned country with strengthened bonds of friendship and cooperation with Nepal and regards Panchashila, besides the common historical and cultural links, as the basis for Indo-Nepalese relations.

Nepal also realize the importance of its relations with India. No one can go to Nepal without passing through India. Being a land-locked country with little scope for trade on northern border, Nepal finds its economic and trade interests linked with relation with India. The nature and extent of trade and India. The nature and extent of trade and transit facilities p[rovided by India constitute a determining factor of Nepalese economic and trading interests. Further, Nepal is fully aware of the inter-dependence of the national security systems of South Asia. It realizes the important link between its security and the security of India. The presence of Chinese in Tibet and the existence of a boundary dispute between its two big neighbours – India and China, have made Nepal highly conscious of its security and of the need to maintain friendly and good neighbourly relations with India and China. The existence of close cultural links with India gives strength to the development of friendship and cooperation with India. Consequently, both India and Nepal have been engaged in the process of building warm, friendly and highly cooperative biulateral relations between them.⁷⁴

If China's main interests in Nepal is the expansion of Communist influence, India's interest is economic and cultural as well is strategic. In a sense, Chinese penetration in Nepal Himalaya is merely designed to secure a stepping stone to fresh expansion of their power in South Asia. But India is in a different geopolitical position as far as Nepal is concerned. Hergeography and economic cultural connections make essential the development of close contact with the Himalayan kingdom, not merely as an a credit unect to her economy, but also as a strategic necessity. This position in turn involves the maintenance of political strength in order to prevent interference with or discrimination against her economic and political interests in Nepal. As Prime Minister Nehru put it in Parliament in December, 1950.

Our interest in the internal condition of Nepal has become still more acute and personal because of the developments across our borders, to be frank, especially those in China and Tibet. Besides our sympathetic interest in Nepal, we were also interested in the security of our own country. From time immemorial, the Himalayas lie mostly on the northern border of Nepal. We cannot allow anything

to go wrong in Nepal on permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened because that would be a risk to our own security.⁷⁵

Achievement of the objective indicated by Nehru demands a subtle and imaginative Indian policy based on close understanding has not yet been fully attained, and consequently Indo-Nepal relations have in recent years been recent years been somewhat strained.

India-Nepal Relations are characterized by two closely inter related phenomena the military strategic and the domestic political. The strategic location of Nepal between two Asian big powers – China and India – not only gives them opportunity to influence the politics of Nepal to suit their respective interests, it also provides the Nepalese ruling circles with a handle to play one power against the other on the one hand, and on the other, by raising the bogey of external interference, to perpetuate their sway over the political machinery at the cost of political development. Since for both socio-historical and geographic reasons India is more relevant to Nepalese politics than China, India becomes the bogey of external interference more often than does China.⁷⁶

Unfortunately, however, the path of Indo-Nepal relations has not been very smooth. The resistance of certain irritants have prevented the development of highly cooperative relations between the two countries. Their relations have been generally friendly and cooperative but neither fully smooth nor high, cooperative. These have been characterized by ups and downs. Even today the issue, of Nepalese demand for being accepted as a zone of peace continues to be an initiating issue, in Indo-Nepal relations. The following factors can be negatively influenced the course of Indo-Nepal relations.⁷⁷

Like Sri Lanka, the problem of ethnic, nationalizing has also affected Indo-Nepalese nations. For instance, the people of Indian origin in Nepal are more often, ill at ease with the treatment meted out to them by the Nepalese government, whereas some sections from the people of Nepalese origin in India have been sympathetic towards the demand of Gorkhaland. Under Skubhash Ghissingh's leadership the Gorkha people have been struggling to carve out a place for themselves within the Indian Union by promoting their demand for

Gorkhaland through a sustained agitation. What is more, the people of Nepalese origin in Bhutan have also been allegedly backing the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) morally as well as materially. Finally, the flow of Chakma refugees from Bangladesh to the North Eastern states of India continues to sour lies between India and Bangladesh. In fact, the migrants from Bangladesh have come to India before 1971, as well as after the birth of Bangladesh in 1971.⁷⁸

Unlike Sikkim's and Bhutan's, Nepal's relations with India are complicated and delicate. A treaty (which like the Indo-Sikkim treaty, was signed in 1990) provides for consultation between India and Nepal in the event of external threat to the independence or security of either of them. The nature of the Indian goal in Nepal – to protect Indian security through the development of a government capable of performing needed services and of carrying out needed reforms – has shown clearly in Indian policy during the last decade. In spite of pressing needs at home, Indian experts have been dispatched to Nepal to train an army and a civil service, to build schools and roads where almost none existed before. The financial efforts India is making in Nepal are shown by the fact that since 1950 India has spent millions of dollars in that country for development purposes. Undoubtedly, Indian aid in Nepal, involving calculations of high strategy, economic planning, and military and programs, are designed to bring maximum returns for the expenditures. This aid is intended to build a shield to keep Chinese power contained north of the Great Himalaya. However, Nepalese politicians, suspicious of Indian imperialism have frequently fulminated against India.

Extreme sensitivity to Indian domination generates strong anti-Indian feeling in Nepal. Because of the Indian criticism of the democratic setback in Nepal, the anti Indian feeling run high after the king's dismissal of elected government in December, 1960. The anti Indian sentiment affords excellent propaganda for enemies of democracy and free world. The Indians point to the contemporary Chinese expansion and repeat India's desire to encourage democracy, to raise literacy, and to increase living standards of the people. Yet, in spite of the logic of the Indian view point, the Nepalese adopt a skeptical approach. A Nepalese politician even warned Sikkim and Bhutan of Indian designs, asked them to free

themselves from Indian interference, and called for a federation of Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan, under Nepali's leadership.

Several explanations can be offered for the existence of anti-Indian feeling in Nepal. To begin with the Rana elements had been dissatisfied with India since 1951 because of its policy toward the incidents that led to the overthrow of the feudal government by the Rana family at that time. Second, the Nepalese public have suspected an Indian hand in making or breaking the massive cabinets which came into power since 1951. Third, the elected government of Koirala was accused by his opponents of having pro-Indian leanings; although the charge was far from true, it reinforced anti-Indian sentiment. Fourth, the occasional management of the huge Indian aid by Indian personnel and technicians led to further criticism of India. Finally, behind Nepal's anti-Indian feeling is the real fear of a larger nation dominating its economy and trade. More than 90 percent of Nepal's foreign trade is controlled by the Indian business community.

The existence of anti-Indian feeling should not be overemphasized, however, although no one can deny the anti-Indian sentiment in Kathmandu valley, the majority of the Hindi-speaking people of the Terai (nearly 60 percent of the total population) – are pro-Indian. In the mountain areas outside the Kathmandu valley, people generally follow a friendly policy toward India while ex-army Gorkha soldiers stand by India. But strongly, the small anti-Indian feudal elements in Nepal feel that the Tibetan revolt against China and the subsequent influx of refugees from Communism was the result of a clash between India and China.

In recent years several factors have produced tension between India and Nepal. Most of the political and economic factors creating tension are relatively minor, but potentially they are capable of causing serious rifts. Significant among the political factors causing tension are the presence of the Indian military mission, started in 1952 to train and reorganize the Royal Nepal Army; the Indian radio operators on the 14 checkposts on the northern border who are accused of spying, and the five Indian commercial attaches in South Nepal who are branded as 'intelligence men.'⁷⁹

The 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship and the letters accompanying it embody the quintessential spirit of understanding between Nepal and India an security and economic development and envisage a close and continuous cooperation between the two governments in co-ordinating their actions and policies in these matters on a mutually advantageous basis. In todays world security is not only a defence related matter but is ritally concerned with economic amaliation and ecological protection. The models furnished by the European Community and the U.S. Canada relationship may be adopted and adapted with necessary modifications to work out a cooperative framework for comprehensive long term relationship between Nepal and India but such an arrangement will undoubtedly call for magnaninuty on the of India as the larger neighbour with a higher level of economic development, , India called help Nepal transform their bilateral relationship from dependence to interdependence through half a dozen multipurpose projects for power, industries, irrigation and water transport it is high time that mutual suspicion and fruitless debates give place to positive cooperation in the economic sphere. Given mutual trust, goodwill and understanding there is no reason why a modes vivenol cannot be envolved to enable Nepal and India to undertake such mutually beneficial projects which may have far reaching implications.

Further, in the context of the carnging international relations India might also take the initiative in evolving a bold well-informed and imaginative policy armed at turning the whole of South Asia into a region of peace friendship and cooperation. If the region vast human and natural resources resosurces could only be pooled together and purposefully directed, it would not be difficult to realize the desired and with untold benefit for all concerned. Voluntary cooperation between states in matters of security and development does not necessarily imply subservience on the part of the either. Nor does it detra of from their respective independence and sovereignty. But latent doubts about an arrangement or lurking suspicion concerning anyone of its stipulations, may render the agreement ineffective at the hour of trial. Therefore the basic understanding between the two countries on matters of security and development meet not be taken for granted but must be revitalized from time to time in the light

of changes in the regional and global environment. The aim of course should always be one of reinforcing the historic bonds between Nepal and India with an eye to the pressing challenges of the present and the future.

The continued need for close cooperation between the two countries can never be overemphasized. Their interdependence may not be equal in both direction. It may not consist of equal degrees of dependence. But an essential interdependence does exist.⁸⁰

Thus, India's relations with Nepal are embroiled rather similarly with the factors of disparity centrality, and perceptions of threat, including a specific one relating to population overflows, leading upto an interplay with extra regional power factors. This interplay in a low key compared with the one at the southern edge, but it is also an intricate one and the economic consequences are damaging.⁸¹

Despite strong geographical historical and cultural links, Nepal has been quite apprehensive about India's role in the region. Being a small state, it fears India. Although there has never been a war between the two countries, Nepal fears that India can attempt an intermention in Nepal for securing its interests vis-à-vis China. Further, Nepal has been living with the fear of Indian interference in its internal affairs. The origin and spread of democratic movement in Nepal was regarded as a fall out of Indian National Movement. After independence, India's support for the liberal democratic movement in the kingdom gave additional strengthen to such Nepalese fears. The sense of dependence in India for conducting sea trade has been a source of fear for Nepal. It believes that India can exert political and economic pressures in Nepal for securing certain goals. The accession of Sikkim to India has been a source of disturbance for Nepal. China and Pakistan have been trying hard to exploit such Nepalese fears for securing their objectives which induce the objective of preventing the development of highly friendly and cooperative relations between the two 'Hindu States' – India and Nepal. The recent explosions in Kathmandu have again aroused fears in Nepal that anti-Nepalese elements having bases in India are behind these explosion. However, there has been no substance in such a wild thinking. Thus, Nepal's fear of India has prevented the speedier development of Indo-Nepal friendship and cooperation.

During the initial years of its independence, India Foreign Policy did not give much importance to relations with Nepal.

During the period 1947-55, Indian foreign policy was governed by the perception of the thesis for India's special relations with Nepal. On 6 December, 1950 Prime Minister Nehru, in his speech, in the Parliament observed, "We recognize Nepal as an independent country and wish her well. But even a child knows that one cannot go to Nepal without passing through India. Therefore, no other country can have a intimate a relationship with Nepal as our is. We would like every other country to appreciate the intimate geographical and cultural relationship that exists between India and Nepal." The statement clearly indicates the Indian thesis of "special relations with Nepal." This view gave the impression that India regarded Nepal as an 'area of India's influence.' It was such a thinking and the perception of its security system on the basis of British legacy that made free India adopt the old British policy towards Nepal.

It signed treaty of peace and friendship with India but felt concerned about he provisions. Naturally then, when India developed big strains and conflict in relations with China, Nepal did not hesitate to develop relations with China and to attempt a balance between India and China. This change in Nepalese attitude became particularly visible after 1960 and brought with it strains in Indo-Nepal relations. India tried to correct the things by following a policy of appeasement towards Nepal but the move failed to repair the damage. Thus, theirs of 'special relations with Nepal' proved to be a harmful factor in Indo-Nepalese relations.

Nepal wants that all countries should accept Nepal as a Zone of Peace. It, particularly wants India to accept and support this proposal India, on the other hand, has not been quite willing to accept this proposal. It is believed that this proposal, accepted, would involve certain limitations for Indian foreign policy in South Asia. India believes that Nepal does not really need such a status. With India, it has already a Treaty of Peace and friendship and the acceptance of this proposal would tantamount to an abrogation of the Treaty. Nepal, however, continues to regard this proposal as a vital necessity for securing its national interest and world peace. The peace zone concept has already become a national aspiration in Nepal. It stands enshrined in the constitution of Nepal. India's

hesitation towards the acceptance of this proposal has been a source of irritation for Nepal India would have to take clear stand on this issue in the near future. Preferably, India should use diplomatic means for satisfying Nepalese desire in respect of this issue. A tacit recognition to this proposal can create a large amount of goodwill for India in Nepal.⁸²

After the return of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to power in January 1980, the process of development of Indo-Nepal friendship and cooperation continued to progress satisfactorily:

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was quite alert to the need for maintaining good neighbouring relations with Nepal. Despite some differences over certain issues, the Government and leaders in the two countries should exemplary pragmatism and realism. The two countries were successful in maintaining and developing further bilateral trade and took steps to overcome trade imbalances and balance of payment problem. Both started cooperating in giving a meaningful start to the process of South Asian economic and trade cooperation the chance of increased cooperative among the countries of South Asian region, further brightened, after the August 1983, New Delhi conference of the Foreign Ministers of the seven South Asian Countries.

The regular contacts and direct communications between the leaders of the two countries helped the growth of understanding between the two countries. In November 1980 Indian Foreign Minister Mr. Narashima Rao visited Nepal and held important discussions on a number of subjects with the Prime Minister Surya Bhadur Thapa and the Panchayat Minister of Nepal. Mr. Navraj Subedi observed, "Indo-Nepalese relations had been further strengthened in recent times by our mutual trust and common aspiration" Mrs. Narasimha Rao also reaffirmed that, "India attached the highest importance in nurturing of friendly and cooperative relations with Nepal." In December 1981, President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy paid a state visit to Nepal. Speaking at the civic reception accorded to him at Kathmandu. President Reddy observed, "Relations between India and Nepal have been historically built on the solid foundations of extensive people to people contacts which make for abiding understanding."

This realization about the necessity of cooperation and friendship between Nepal and India indeed helped the two countries to overcome problems and resolve their differences and keep up the process of development of friendship and cooperation. Both have been able to maintain and develop further trade links and economic cooperation. India maintained its commitments regarding the completion of hydroelectric projects in Nepal.

Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has stepped up the drive to secure more friendly and cooperative relations with this Himalayan Kingdom, New Delhi has shown full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability of Nepal by giving due importance to Nepal the emergence of SAARC has indeed helped and is bound to strengthen further the economic trade and cultural cooperation among the countries of South Asia in general and among India and Nepal in particular because of deep and historical ties between those two countries.

The king of Nepal's visits to India in 1986 has helped the two countries to review their relations. Difference over zone of peace status for Nepal continued to surrender the talks. However, both the Nepalese King and Indian Prime Minister, did not allow this negative factor to adversely affect the course of growing Indo-Nepalese friendly cooperation in economic trade cultural and technological spheres. Both accepted that the Panchsheela spirit and five principles constituted the best basis for conducting their bilateral relations.

Thus, India and Nepal continue to fulfil their desire to increase bilateral cooperative and to strengthen the bonds of friendship. India fully respects the sovereignty of Nepal and deals with Nepal on an equal basis. Realising the strategic importance of Nepal, Indian foreign policy has now very actively engaged in the process of developing Indo-Nepali ties. Nepal also now realized better the importance of its relations with India. It has become confident that India does not want to interfere with the internal political affairs of Nepal. The development of trade links and economic relations have helped Nepal in achieving the objectives of its national policy. Both the countries are now working towards the further cementing of their relations. "In the current scheme of things," writes Dr. Bimal Prasad, "Nepal is likely develop cooperative relations with India on the basis of co-equality co-sharing non-dominance and non-dictator." The only outstanding

issue that needs careful holding is the Nepalese proposal for getting the status of a peace zone. Indian diplomacy must come forward to amicably sort out and settle the issue.⁸³

Continuously supported the SAARC and its various activities, and have looked towards it with a high hopes. Nepal has indeed viewed SAARC as a forum to solve its bilateral problems at the regional level. SAARC has been considered as an important step in the direction of multilateralism. Nepal seems to have believed that the SAARC can provide economic independence to smaller nations of the region against the big powers, particularly India. Therefore, it has used it as a forum to raise a number of bilateral issues to India's discomfort.

Nepal has stressed upon the development of the SAARC on the pattern of United Nations at the global level. In the New Delhi conference of the SAARC countries Nepal's foreign minister said, "the principles of the UN Charter enshrined in the SAARC charter were vital." Nepal has emphasized upon the maximization of benefits by optimal use of natural resources in the region. It was also wished that the benefits should be shared on the basis of equality. In the Kathmandu meeting, King Birendra had voiced Nepal's opposition to balkenization of states and occupation of one country by another. But despite its active role in the SAARC, Nepal appears to have tried to maintain a low profile in certain cases where controversy had crept up on bilateral matter.

Until a few years back, South Asia was the only region which did not have any regional organization of its own. The SAARC can be considered a welcome development because of the fact that the South Asian States have many differences in their political style, economic development, size, etc. Based on the principals of equality and common interest, it provides a forum for the smaller states of the region to assert their independence and national identity. The SAARC provides an opportunity to participate independently, discuss and take decision on various issues of common interest. It can also prove as a catalyst for the economic of the South Asian States by providing increased opportunities of trade and aid.

Nepal has obviously viewed SAARC as a forum to maintain its national identity, particularly against its southern neighbours which has indeed been a problem of the Nepalese foreign policy. Although Nepal has been trying to reduce its dependence over India but, so far it has not succeeded beyond a limit. Certain common interests can of course be served through SAARC. But it should be noted that the regional cooperation cannot be an alternative to bilateral arrangements. Particularly, in the present State of interstate relationship and the issues involved therein, the SAARC cannot be helpful beyond a limit.

So far as the politico-strategic aspect is concerned it is a fact that Nepal has strategic importance for India. Both the countries have tried to develop an understanding on mutual strategic issues. In spite of minor irritants from the Nepalese side, the 1950 treaty still provides a base for such a bilateral understanding. So long as this understanding is maintained any attempts towards regionalization of strategic issues will not matter much for Nepal and India. Moreover, any common consciousness on collective regional security is yet to emerge. The South Asian countries have generally believed that the subcontinent should be free from superpower interference but their politics have been just opposed to it. In those circumstances collective regional security approach is hardly possible.

In economic matters as well there are serious bilateral overtones. Nepal's economy is highly influenced by India. Nepal's landlocked position has made Nepal virtually India-locked on economic matters. Even if Nepal would try to increase its regional trade it would only be possible after India provides adequate transit facilities. In the case of exploitation of its natural resources, particularly water resources, India can be the most convenient partner. In fact, in certain cases India's cooperation is not merely desirable but essential. Thus, keeping these constraints in view, it can be said that Nepal will have to rely heavily on bilateral approach unless and until its economy reaches a stage of self reliance. But this does not mean to suggest that the SAARC is an exercise in disguise from the Nepalese point of view. It can indeed be helpful in solving certain common problems. It is possible to make joint efforts towards developing appropriate technology, exchanging experiences and knowledge regarding education science,

planning, etc. and searching remedies for problems like poverty and population control. Regional cooperation can also be helpful in generating goodwill among the member countries, which may be helpful in resolving their disputes. Moreover, it also gives some sort of a psychological satisfaction to the identity problem with which the smaller South Asian States are faced.⁸⁴

India - Bhutan Relations

The small but independent kingdom of Bhutan in the eastern Himalayas occupies a somewhat anomalous position in South Asia. It is the only state in the region without a substantial 'Indian' component in its population, which is made up almost entirely of Tibeto-Burma speaking groups and some recent immigrants from Nepal. Moreover, traditional ties in the past were largely directed northwards to Tibet. Today it is the only country which upholds a form of Barmuist Buddhism as its state religion. And among South Asian countries it has the lowest population density, located in a range of mountains to which access from the north is made difficult by the main Himalayan range and from the south by dense subtropical forests. Bhutan's geographical isolation is not the only cause of its unique and sovereign status today. Historical and cultural factors can readily be shown to have conspired with geography to ensure its continuing survival.⁸⁵

Since 1907, Bhutan has been ruled autocratically, but the feudalistic system of government is changing slowly, and the country seems to be evolving peacefully into a new democratic nation under India's guidance and protection.

Although Bhutan is "guided by the advice of the government of India in regard to its external relations", certain Bhutanese leaders are developing "Sovereignty consciousness". The desire that Bhutan become a sovereign state has been expressed in the states advisory council, and the issue of 'guidance' by India has been the subject of heated discussion in the kingdom. Prime Minister Nehru has advised Bhutan against establishing diplomatic relations with foreign countries, and the king has accepted Nehru's advice. The present king, Jigme Singhye Wangchuk, a young man of 45, has made drastic changes in the system of government that may eventually lead to the establishment of a constitutional

monarchy. Changing patterns in Bhutanese affairs are to be recognized in all aspects of the kingdom's politico geographic development.⁸⁶

Before 1949, Indo-Bhutan relations were governed by the 1865 Treaty as amended by January 1910 Treaty. Under this Treaty, the British Government undertook to exercise no interference in the internal affairs of Bhutan and the Bhutan Government agreed to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to its external relations.

After Independence, the Government of India concluded a fresh treaty with Bhutan on 8 August 1949. Under this treaty the Government of Bhutan agreed to be guided by the Government of India in regard to its external relations, and the Government of India undertook not to interfere in the internal administration of Bhutan.

Bhutan is a sovereign state India has been successful in assuring Bhutan that its sovereignty and internal autonomy standfully acknowledged and respected by India. In 1971, India sponsored Bhutan for membership of the United Nations and this put to an end to all such suspicions that India has designs over Bhutan. Since this development Indo-Bhutan relations have become closer and maturer. Bhutan feels fully satisfied with its relations with India. It has successfully resisted temptation of entering into diplomatic relation with other countries. In particular, it has been keeping away 'The China feelers'.

Bhutan fully realizes that her security is closely linked with India. Her rulers have been wise enough to have a special treaty relationship with India. They know, opines T.N.Kaul, that if it comes to the crunch, India would defend their security because it is vital to her own. China does not seem to have reconciled herself to this special relationship but has not dared to violate it. She has thrown gentle feelers, followed by vague threats through Bhutanese graziers, cowherds and frontier guards, from time to time, but Bhutan has stood firmly by her Treaty with India. In 1975, when Sikkim became a part of the Indian Union, many countries, particularly, China, tried hard to impress upon Bhutan the need to secure Bhutan against possible Sikkim type Indian role in Bhutan. The ruler of Bhutan, King Jigme Singhs Wangchuk, however, paid no heed to such propoganda and felt assured

of India's respect for the sovereignty of Bhutan, India's decision to sponsor Bhutan's membership of the United Nations, was quoted as the clear proof of Indian good will towards Bhutan. New Bhutan her diplomatic relations with Bangladesh and Nepal and consular relation with Singapore, Kuwait and Hong-Kong. Bhutan is a member of the world bank.

India on her part has been fully alive to the developmental needs of Bhutan, and has always contributed generously towards the economic development of Bhutan. India has provided economic, material and technical help to Bhutan for developing transport, communication and industrial facilities in the small Himalayan kingdom. India has built the beautiful 200 km. long mountain road for ; Phuntsoling in North Bengal to Thimpu, the capital of Bhutan and airstrips at Paro and Thimpu. In 1975, India undertook to meet the entire cost (estimated at Rs. 83 crores) of the ambitious Bhutanese hydro-electric project on the Chukha river and Purden Cement Plan. Bhutan, on its part has always acknowledged and appreciated India's cooperation and has tried to maintain and develop cordial relations with India. There exists good neighbourliness between India and Bhutan, as king Wangchuk has on many occasion observed that "India is not only our close neighbour but our genuine friend, "India is fully aware of the need to maintain and further strengthen friendship and cooperation with Bhutan. However, things should not be taken for granted. So far, Bhutan has followed a closer relationship with India because it accords with the security and national interest of both the countries. This close relation must be given more substance and strength on a reciprocal basis, through continued contacts, meetings and consultations at highest levels. India should prevent Bhutan from succumbing to Chinese pressures and for this, it should more readily come forward to accommodate the needs and aspirations of Bhutan. The past history of cooperation must be used as a basis for strengthening the relationship in the times to come. T.N.Kaul, in his book *Diplomacy in Peace and War*, has beautifully analysed the Indo-Bhutan relations within the border context of India's policy towards its small neighbours. He writes, "We should avoid the mistakes as we made in Nepal and not take smaller countries for granted or act as their big brother. They are sensitive, even touchy, on small things, proud and

easily hurt, we must respect their sensibilities, honour their national aspirations and win their trust and confidence. They are subject to many rules and pressures, stresses and strains internally and can't bear these alone without understanding and respect of a friendly neighbour like India." It is a matter of satisfaction that relations between India and Bhutan are friendly and are developing along the right lines. They could become a model relations between a big country and a small. We should make efforts, honestly and sincerely, towards this end "Bhutan has come of age and we can depend on the new king and his people to reciprocate our efforts in further strengthening friendly relations."⁸⁷

But Bhutan, another Himalayan kingdom like Nepal, with asymmetrical ties with India dating back to the late Parties, also went through a similar process of striving for greater autonomy Trading carefully, perhaps more carefully than Nepal. She first took a number of steps to ease her way out of India's shadow, and to activate her presence and participation in international politics. Bhutan, for example, replaced Hindi, India's main language, with English as her language of education, diminished the number of expatriate Indians working in the civil service and made it difficult for Indians to obtain entry permits easily. At the same time, she activated her diplomacy to seek other trade partners, and other aid donors, widened her network of diplomatic relations, and sought a role for herself in international organizations. To bypass India in her international communication links, she sought Japanese assistance to build a satellite earth station.⁸⁸

In diplomatic terms, and quite apart from considerations of vital strategy, India treats Bhutan and the other Himalayan kingdoms as a regional unit within the Indian defence perimeter. India-Bhutan relations traditionally emphasize the strengthening of peace and security through frequent consultations and cooperative action.

A major difficulty in Bhutan-India relationships is the extreme dependence of the Himalayan kingdom upon India for its economic development and prosperity. It is essentially a relationship between a small and entirely undeveloped country and a partly developed, large nation itself in need of massive economic aid. What Bhutan needs is a great capital investment to improve communications, set up agricultural production and develop its natural resources.

In his talks with Indian officials in February, 1961, the Bhutanese maharaja made it clear that Bhutan will have no direct dealings with China, despite Peking's refusal to accept India's privileges in Bhutan's foreign relations.⁸⁹ During 1961-1962 India took several effective measures to strengthen Bhutan's defense in matters relating to China's threat and the border dispute. A high level meeting held in February, 1961, presided over by Prime Minister Nehru and attended by the maharaja of Bhutan and India's defense minister and service chiefs, chalked out a new programme for the discharge of India's responsibility for the defense of Bhutan. The strength of the Indian defense forces stationed to answer rapidly a call from Bhutan has been substantially increased. An intensive study of the facilities for Indian Air Force operations over Bhutan is being made.

The maharaja of Bhutan has agreed with India that in the present situation, when Bhutan's major problems are its dispute with China and the need for rapid communications development, it was not propitious to think of links with international organizations or western countries. Despite this agreement, Bhutan became a full participant in the Colombo Plan with Indian sponsorship.

Bhutan, like India, emphasizes peace and disarmament but the two countries do not agree on the nuclear issues. While Bhutan signed nuclear non-proliferation treaty in 1985, India is not prepared to sign it since it considers the treaty discriminatory. Besides, Thimphu has also developed divergence on the proposal to make the South Asian region a nuclear free zone. India has been opposed to the idea of nuclear free zones in selected areas of the world and to the legitimization of the possession of nuclear weapons by a few powers. Till recently Bhutan had been willing in the UN General Assembly against the Pakistan - sponsored resolution calling for the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in South Asia. At the last session of the UN General Assembly, Bhutan supported the resolution sponsored by Pakistan and several other countries. Pakistan has been making this proposal since 1974. India is opposed to the proposal on the ground that nuclear war would not remain confined to a particular zone but would engulf the whole world.

Bhutan and India also differ on the issue of mobilizing external assistance to SAARC. Thimphu seeks to expand economic cooperation within the framework of

SAARC even with the help of external assistance. At the SAARC ministerial meeting at Kathmandu on 31 October, 1987, Bhutan's foreign minister, Tyonpo Dawa Tsering, said that tapping of external aid from appropriate source would not negate the efforts for collective self-reliance.

While Bhutan and Bangladesh underlined the need for external assistance, India stressed the virtue of self-reliance in the regional context. The latter made it clear that once external aid was accepted by SAARC, it would be difficult to keep it from the dangers of neo-colonialism and external pressures.⁹⁰ Bhutan's stance on nuclear issues and external assistance may have been influenced by its genuine desire for peace and development. But the small states of the South Asian region are swayed by other considerations. Some scholars hold that "because of the preponderance of India in the area, a dichotomy exists between India on the one hand, and its respective neighbours on the other."⁹¹ Nevertheless there is no evidence that the disparity between India and its neighbours has in any way enabled the former to impose its own preferences or policies upon the latter.

As a matter of fact, the regional cooperation in South Asia will amount to cooperation of all other South Asian States with India, but the small states of South Asia have ambivalent attitudes towards cooperation with India.

But the political sceneri of Bhutan is somewhat different from other South Asian States. Unlike Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Srilanka. Bhutan is not faced with any political trouble. Under the present stage of political development of the kingdom there are no political factions that thrive on anti Indian planks nor are political dissidents who look to the Indian support that is why Bhutan's relations with India are characterized not by fear or apprehensions but by mutual trust and the spirit of mutual cooperation. Hence, Thimphu seeks to strengthen not only SAARC but also desires to expand its cooperation with India. For instance, with Indian assistance it has been able to reduce its trade deficit with India by developing hydroelectric projects and cement industries with Indian assistance and exporting surplus cement and electricity to India. However, Bhutan like other small states of South Asia is concerned about its identity and security. It is not inclined to cultivate political links with extra regional powers as some South Asian States have sought to strengthen their security by forging relationship with extra regional

powers, especially the US and China. This has created a politics strategic divide in the region that hampers and progress of SAARC, in fact, extra – regional powers have sought to promote their own interests in the region.” The South Asian States can of course strengthen their security as well as ensure the success of SAARC by resorting to regional approach to the problems of identify and security.

In conclusion it may be said that Bhutan has not so far posed any serious challenge to Indian foreign policy and strategic planning, nor has it put forward an earnest demand for the revision of the 1949 treaty but the relations between the two countries can't be taken for granted for too long. At the least, India must reconsider its premise that Bhutan should necessarily hold identical views on international and regional affairs. We have seen already that regarding Afghanistan and Kampuchea Bhutan has held views different from those of India. There are new indications that even on South Asian regional affairs Bhutan's position on certain vital issues is not identical with that of India. On the question of super power involvement in South Asian affairs Bhutan probably continues to respect Indian sensitivities.⁹² but on the crucial question of declaring the region as a nuclear free zone its position tends to oppose that of India and support Pakistan's.

In apparent support of Pakistani Prime Minister M.K. Junejo's efforts at the third SAARC Summit in Kathmandu in November 1987 to strive for "regional non-proliferation" which he saw as "inherently achievable, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk expressed" serious concern at the prospect of nuclear weapons development in South Asia" and said that "we can hardly call upon the major powers to curtail their nuclear weapons programmes if we ourselves are not prepared to prevent its development in our own region. SAARC can provide a forum to conduct a meaningful dialogue among our countries on this vital issue."⁹³ In contrast, India's stand is global non-proliferation in which there is no scope for any regional arrangement.

The holding of SAARC meeting in Thimpu as well as the Tamil Sri Lankan talks at Thimpu, has infused a new confidence in Bhutan as a country with respect, prestige and role in international relations. Bhutan fully realizes and appreciates India's efforts in securing her national interests without in any way affecting the prestige and status of Bhutan in international relations. Rajiv Gandhi's initiation to

encourage and develop more nature and deep friendship and cooperation with India's neighbours has given further strength to the cause of Indo-Bhutanese highly friendly and cooperative relations. Bhutan also fully realizes the fact that because of the topography and geo-politics of the area the security and progress of the kingdom stands related to the concept of special relations with India. Bilateral friendly cooperation as members of the SAARC has been developing in a very satisfactory and healthy manner.⁹⁴

India – Maldives Relations

Maldives is the smallest nation of the South Asian Region but it gains importance for its strategic and geopolitical situation in the Indian ocean. It is a group of 1,190 coral islands which extend in the sea from 9°6' North latitude to 4°42' South latitude and from 72°33' to 73°44' East longitude. Like Chagos and Lakshadweep, Maldives also has its base on the mountains underneath the sea, covered with reefs built by the coral polyps.

At one time in the history, the island nation was colonized by the Portuguese and then by the British. The country became an independent sovereign nation in the year 1965 as a result of the process of decolonization.

One of the peculiar features of the Maldivian society, which is not to be seen in any of the South Asian countries, is that it has only one caste and one religion Sunny Muslims. Even Pakistan, which got separated on the basis of religion can hardly boast of being purely a Muslim society the way Maldives can. There are instances in the history of Maldivian society and culture wherein it is evident that the island also had Buddhism that was replaced by Islam when Yusuf Shamsuddin came from Persia as an apostle of Islam. Unlike other SAARC countries, the Maldives may not face any ethnic problem. But there can scarcely be any doubt about the fact that the smallness of the country poses too many problems. Other factors accounting for its slow rate of development are scanty resources and absence of local expertise in almost every field. For very technical advice, the nation depends on foreign help. This apart, even for its security, the nation depends on foreign military assistance. The country totally depends on foreign

capital, technology and management expertise for its social and economic development. This small nation has to depend on foreign borrowings even to meet its domestic requirements.⁹⁵

From the examination of the above facts it emerges that smallness of the country gives rise to several internal as well external problems. But Artuc of being small in size the island nation is very prove to coups. Within ten years the country witnessed four important political upheavals which were absent till such time it was a British protecto rate. In spite of the fact that the British vacated the land they continued their foothold in the Gan island using it as their naval base. The Gan island attracts so many countries of the world because each one of them is interested in having it for their military base in the Indian ocean. Another cause of Gan island's importance is that it is the nearest to Diego Garcia where the US Central Command base is situated. In this competition of power rivalry it is very difficult at times for small nations to dony the additional incentives offered by powerful nations. At times, it gives rise to internal fragmentation in the society and te entire social fabric is threatened. As a result , the nation gets divided into two rival factions. Instability thus created in the polity invites political intrigues leading to coups aided and abetted by interested foreign powers. Maldives is no exception to it. The country faced November 1988coups because of this reason. It is very clear by the development .. of events that Iran, Libiya and Soviet Union gave attractive incentives to Maldives just to have their base on Gan island.

Under such pressing conditions it becomes imperative for a small nation to align with a more powerful country or international forums for its security, and SAARC came in handy for Maldives. But joining SAARC the member country neither loses its sovereignty nor suffers from the complex of being small and weak. There is no difference in the status between India, the biggest country of the region and the most powerful of the SAARC members and the Maldives, the smallest and the weakest.

The subordinate status fall the South Asian countries in the international economic system should be viewed as the backdrop for the formation of SAARC. All the member countries have similar problems having similar political and social background. SAARC presupposes unilateral modes of action based on collective

self reliance amongst its member countries. It also emphasizes the significance of negotiations and bargaining amongst its members. The idea of regional cooperation amongst the countries of South Asia is not altogether a novel one in the sense that these countries already have an experience of some sort of collaboration in the forums like ESCAP, NAM and commonwealth. It was, however, felt that smallest countries of the region with a view to facilitate socio-economic development should be encouraged and helped to come together in some form of regional cooperation, which would also help them in safeguarding their national independence and bilateral integrity against countervailing pressure of strong neighbours.

The idea of SAARC was not solid immediately in the beginning. Most important, countries like India, Pakistan and even Sri Lanka took quite sometime to really think over this arrangement of regional cooperation. In fact, Sri Lanka joined it very late only when it was convinced that it would not be granted membership of ASEAN – the important international forum of South East Asian countries. But once Sri Lanka joined SAARC, it did not fancy it just as an intellectual exercise or merely as a means of harmonizing an assessment of regulations but as a treaty constructive element in the development process. SAARC emphasized the trust amongst its member countries. To be a member of SAARC is a decision consciously taken by its members without any ideological bias. Regarding SAARC, Maldives believed that since economy of any country was paramountly interdependent, hence without a well-knit network of cooperation among te neighbours, peace and development could not be achieved. Hence goodwill and trust are supposed to be the hallmarks for such kind of cooperation.

Although there is no dearts of bilateral problems among the SAARC member countries, such issues are prevented from undermining the cherished goal of regional cooperation. In the first few years of its inception, SAARC was threatened by the deteriorating Indo-Sri Lanka relations, then by Indo-Pak relations, by Indo-Nepal relations and also Chakma refugees of Bangladesh, but it was owing to the genuine political will that SAARC could survive through these turmoils. These bilateral problems were, to some extent, solved by mediation of the third SAARC fellow member country and provided no Scope for any external

force for its role in the region. SAARC was not to be hindered with bilateral concerns, otherwise it would have created a stumbling block in the process of regional cooperation. The SAARC charter states : "Regional cooperation cannot be reconciled with ignorance in or encouragement to acts directed against the sovereignty, unity and integrity of neighbours.

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At the Foreign Minister's meet at New Delhi, Pakistan had almost tried to amend the charter by joining Sri Lanka for raising bilateral issues at the SAARC meetings. What Maldives thought about was that expansion of SAARC activities should be based on the principle of equitable benefits, given the various economic and other capacities that existed within the region. The Foreign Minister of Maldives expressed the views of his government in Kathmandu, that the SAARC members should develop a common strategy to deal with the "arrogance of protectionism" and foreign debts.

The President of Maldives, Abdul Gayam, paid glowing tributes to the Indo-Sri Lanka accord and the wisdom of Jayawardene and Rajiv Gandhi for arriving at a very difficult solution to a four-year old ethnic problem. Referring to the economic problem he said that the global economic situation was more than discouraging, leaving the developing countries in a deep debt. Speaking on the 'SAARC-2000 regional Plan' the Maldivian Foreign Secretary, Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, said that for preventing and eliminating terrorism in the region cooperation amongst the fellow members is very essential and the "scooge of terrorism has assumed new and alarming proportions." It was agreed that 325,000 Maldivian Rufiyas will be contributed towards establishing regional institutions for SAARC activities.⁹⁶

Once common factor amongst all the South Asian countries is that they all suffer from a fear of threat from India. But the fact remains that the security of all its neighbours is on India's interest and is vital to its own security and stability. The smaller SAARC nation suffer from this threat perception for which there is no validity. In case of sending IPKF to Sri Lanka it was in the interest of Indian external security and also internal peace and stability. When on 3 November 1988, India sent military help to Maldives into combat the coup, it was again in the SAARC spirit and also to establish peace in the region. No threat was involved in either of these cases to these small fellow SAARC members.

But Indian help to Maldives was in true SAARC spirit and real test for cooperation and understanding.

As has been discussed earlier, the small size of any country is one of the factors to get aligned with a mono powerful nation or organization even for its internal stability and security. Maldives had to face opposition from within its own people who, it is said were conserved after President Gayaom's first election to the Presidency. SAARC membership proved very beneficial and also a boom in combating the coup. India's action in maintaining the sovereignty and integrity against an external threat was appreciated by all the SAARC countries.⁹⁷

Maldives is indebted to India for its successful effort to foil a coup attempt in November 1988. Although India's neighbours normally avoid any public commitment to the Indian security system, their own security policies are based on the assumption of an Indian guarantee against extra-regional aggression.⁹⁸ The major exception to the Indian security system is, of course, Pakistan.

Sepaking at Maldives Mrs. Gandhi observed : "We in India do not believe in big and small. We accept the sovereignty of independent nations, and if we want to strengthen ourselves, it is not to make our power felt, but merely to enable us to stand on our own feet and to look after our own people."⁹⁹ Likewise, Vajpayee once told Pakistan's Agha Shahi that "While India happens to be a big country, it's a approach, is not of a big brother."¹⁰⁰

In other words, India's policy towards the neighbours has been based upon friendliness, equality, reciprocity and mutuality to the extent that is possible in the relations between the states so very different in geopolitical and capabilities for me.¹⁰¹

As India withdraw its forces from Male (1990) after the Gayoom regimes had been saved from external intervention.

In such of those cases, India demonstrated its policy interest in a fair, friendly and durable territorial settlement with its neighbours, against any suspicious of Indian desire for acquisition or dismemberment of the territories of its neighbours.

India Pakistan Relations

From the above analysis it became clear in South Asia, India's relations with its smaller neighbours are developing satisfactorily.

Consequently to the restoration of democracy in Nepal, Indo-Nepal relations have undergone a most welcome transformation. India's relations with Bhutan and Maldives have always been models of friendship and cooperation. Lately, even Sri Lanka has begun to show unwanted solicitude for Indian concerns and interests. Relations with Bangladesh will improve as democracies riots in that country deepen. Pakistan has failed to convert the SAARC process into a going-up against India exercise.

It is axiomatic that India-Pakistan relations will have to reorient to the changing reality. The old paradigms that governed their bilateral contacts will have to be dismantled and a stable working relationship forged, if they are to prevent their isolation from the rest of the world community. For India's foreign policy objectives, although Pakistan and sub-continental affairs will continue to remain top priority items, it will have to be part of its global efforts to increase inter dependency in matters of trade, economics, technology and ecology. India simply can't get bagged down in confrontationist struggles in the region because notions of national sovereignty, economic exclusivity, practices of destabilisation, incitement to terrorism, denial of human rights and repression of democracy have become outdated and irrelevant. In a word that increasingly becomes more interdependent the dangers and consequences of lagging behind the pack far outweigh the advantages of continuing to practice inter-state relations based on outmoded institutions and beliefs.

In a fast integrating world as economics, trade and technology rapidly replace military strength as the currency of international power, Indian foreign policy has to take these new "essential" into account whilst looking for peace in the sub-continent.

New beginnings in India Pakistan relations will have to be made if the two countries are to take advantage of the unique global situation in which peace and development have a chance of surviving. India's Pakistan policy will have to be

predicted upon two sets of initiatives - there would have to be a unilateral component and there would have to be a set of bilateral initiatives that offer Islamabad more than what it can refuse.

The post-partition scenerio and consequent suspicious need to be eradicated. With determination, hope and optimism the democratic government of India and Pakistan have to resume bilateral dialogue to diffuse the tension.

As democratic and secular country, India is committed to non-alignment and peaceful coexistence. Through bilateral approach India has succeeded in resolving several contentious issues with her other neighbours. At various regional and international for India has justified its position on Kashmir and the Nuclear issue. Both India and Pakistan willingly concluded the Simla agreement in 1972 and resolved to sort out the Kashmir issue bilaterally. India's attitude towards foreign affairs in the preceding decades shows that it was mainly guided by the consideration of bilateral and regional issues which emphasized socio-economic development and consolidation of democratic processes. India has pursued a consistent policy to keep at bay external powers from the South Asian region. Therefore, the democratic Government of India expects similar response from the democratic government of Pakistan. It might be recalled that Simla Agreement was concluded between the two democratic governments (led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Z.A.Bhutto) in 1972. Later on, the two democratic Governments (led by Rajiv Gandhi and Benajir Bhutto) concluded bilateral agreements not to attack each other nuclear installations in 1989. However, at the present moment the democratic governments led by Narasimha Rao and Benajir Bhutto are facing problems, somewhat hampering bold policy initiatives to resume dialogue. Both the governments are faced with dilemma have to adjust domestic priority with foreign policy requirements. Perhaps benazir Bhutto's government finds itself hampered in taking decisive steps to revamp foreign policy matters. The role of the military establishment in this regard needs corrective measures. The recent tactical exercise and destabilising moves of the apposition leader, Mian Nawaz Sharif, are matters that need serious rethinking. In view of her domestic compulsions and constraints, Benazir Bhutto has seemed to be exhuted into 'Anti-India Trade.'

The Benazir government has to do serious rethinking about the activities of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), since the manifest apprehension is that the ISI has been interfering in India's domestic affairs. Since General Zia's regime the ISI has been alleged to be aiding and abetting terrorists in Punjab and Kashmir. This is a sore-point and needs to be looked into with urgency calls for.

In spite of repeated moves for externalization of the Kashmir issue, the government of Pakistan scored practically little. The world community, including the Muslim world, by and large, hold that the Kashmir issue needs to be settled bilaterally within the framework of the Simla Agreement. Pakistan's parity complex is another hindering factor in making the bilateral approach successful. India's size and strategic position in the South Asian region is the main reason for Pakistan's apprehensions. The image of the blustering 'big brother' has been an impediment. For better or worse, such identity has not helped India wither. Conceding that successive governments in Pakistan have been working under constraints of one kind or the other, India's genuine wish to extend bilaterism need not be suspected. India continues to be optimistic about eventual emergence of bilateral conflict-resolution strategy. It has shown, time and again, its readiness to resolve contentious political and strategic issues taking due cognizance of the principle of 'sovereign equality'. It is India's vested interest the democracy prevails and gets sustenance in Pakistan. The issues of destabilisation, annexation or systemic disruption have no place on the agenda of India's national interest.

The present democratic government of India has optimistically sought to persuade its neighbour to amicably resolve all outstanding issues across the table. Upholding the principles of 'sovereign equality' and 'peaceful existence' India believes that resolution of other minor issues related with Siachen, Waller Baragge & Tulbul navigation project and Sir Creek, would not pose any serious difficulty.

It is the joint responsibility of the two democratic governments that they seriously come together and devise mutually acceptable conflict resolution formulae and confidence building techniques, and desist from taking recourse to populist measures, arousing passions over sensitive issues. It is expected of on both sides of the border that they would not indulge in stinging match and would not be provoked into crossing the limits of civilized norms of inter-state dealings.

Restraint on public statements only conform the integrity and identity of self-governing societies.

The emerging delegations of the new world order permit to no luxury of rhetoric and populations. The past might have been unworldly of recalling with justification. The false barriers and inhibitions ought to go. New vision is the need of the hour just as new horizon await discerning overtures for peace, goodwill harmony and accommodation on the part of both, India and Pakistan. The governments and the thinking peoples on either side, have no other worthy alternative.

The Simla Agreement stipulates that all disputes between India and Pakistan shall be settled bilaterally through negotiations, and the use of force in their dealing shall be avoided.

It was after the 1971 military debacle that Pakistan's strategy towards India underwent a change. Instead of emphasizing the solution of the Kashmir problem as a pre-condition for any normalization of relations, the step by step improvement of their bilateral relations was viewed as conducive to creating a positive environment for addressing complex problems like Kashmir. However, Pakistan was still reluctant about entering into a formal non-aggression treaty with India. That is why the stipulation in the Simla Agreement (1971) that India and Pakistan would not use force against each other was phrased in a manner that is stopped short at a formal non-aggression pact.¹⁰²

If India's successful military action projected has a new regional power, the diplomatic aftermath of the bilateral Simla Agreement was equally important. For the Indo-Pakistan negotiations that took place in that town were a clear recognition of the new power reality. For example, the bilateral accord that was finally concluded clearly stipulated that all the differences between the two countries had to be resolved bilaterally, undoubtedly an implicit recognition by Pakistan that all external influences that she had hitherto used to counter India were no longer permissible.¹⁰³

No other issue has generated so much ill will between India and Pakistan as the Kashmir dispute. Even the end of the cold war and the consequent changes in world order have not been able to dampen the issues. The Pakistan have treated the Kashmir dispute as evidence of broken pledges and Indian duplicity. The Indians of

course consider Kashmir to be an integral part of India and all Pakistani attempts to raise the issue of international for not only invoke strong Indian reactions but are also viewed as a sinister Pakistani device to malign India. While India has been consistently attempting to busy the issue by adopting the strategy of 'focus Shipping', the Pakistan's never miss an opportunity to highlight the issue at the appropriate for a. With the passage of forty three years, the issues has become so complicated that neither government can afford not to assert its respective interpretations.

In the summer of 1993 India and Pakistan initiated bilateral talks for setting the Kashmir dispute. The bilateral talks, first held at the Queens Coronation in June 1953, continued in Karachi and Delhi in July and August. The talks began in an atmosphere of goodwill but soon these became clouded because of certain negative developments. On August, 9, 1953, Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed and detained by the Government of India on charges of anti-national activities. In February 1954, Kashmir's constituent Assembly unanimously ratified the state's accession to India. Both these developments made the atmosphere heavy and suspicious. Further damage was done to the talks when the American decision to provide large quantities of military and the Pakistani decision to join the Western military Alliance were announced in 1959. Despite the efforts made by Pakistani Governor, General Gulosm Meeharmand and the decision of India reciprocate the goodwill no progress could be registered toward an agreement over Kashmir. The Pakistani decision to join American sponsored military alliances was interpreted by India as a device for pressurizing India. Consequently, Indian stand over Kashmir came to be stated as "the inviolability of Kashmir's accession to India." The change of Government in Pakistan in 1956 and Prime Minister Choudhri Mohammed Ali's decision to resume the struggle at the United Nations obviously with the help of Pakistan's new allies, an end to the era of bilateral talks. The Indian stand a Kashmir now rejected the demand for plebiscite on the ground that the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir already has ratified Kashmir's accession to India and the Constitution of Kashmir under Article 111 Stated. The state of J & K is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India' This further handed the Pakistani attitude.

Consequently, India and Pakistan once again became engaged in sharp interactions over Kashmir in the Security Council.

The second major issue invoking security concerns is the nuclear factor. Although there is no real basis for affirming that either Pakistan is close to developing and testing a bomb or India is well on its way to nuclear weapons acquisition, many high priests of non-proliferation have already convicted both of them for endangering the world. Neither government has ever admitted any plans to tread on the forbidden path, yet both accuse each other for advancing towards the eventual weapons acquisition.

The third factor directly impeding the deferred Indo-Pak harmony is the occurrence of periodic domestic upheavals to divert attention from pressing internal problems with an external crisis not a very uncommon practice among Third World Countries. Hostile external responses, of course, make it relatively easy to enhance cohesion by using emotional and sentimental Targan. However, such tactics make the situation extremely critical in those countries which are already beset by complex religious, ethnic and political cleavages. Both India and Pakistan are blessed with a fair share of internal problems. Being laced in a conflictual cobweb, both have periodically exploited each other's internal turmoils and tensions through propaganda and other available means.

The fourth factor taking a heavy toll of Indo-Pak relations is the presence of outside equilibrators. Relatively weaker countries are more prone to seek help from outside if the insiders abandon peaceful pursuits and consistently demonstrate the arrogance of power. Both the Americans and the Soviets were introduced to the area by Pakistan and India, respectively, each seeking to satisfy its perceived security requirements. The Pakistan's sense of insecurity brought the Americans to South Asia and quick Indian reaction to this introduced the Soviets to the region. Had India accepted the birth of Pakistan gracefully and resolved the issues emanating from the ill-planned partition process peacefully, the need for introducing outside equalizers would never have arisen. In many ways, both India and Pakistan have been reacting more to each other rather than initiating innovative processes. Both countries consider the introduction of outsiders as moves to counter the perceived threats. China was initially introduced to the region by India but after the

Sino-Indian border clash, China began to side with Pakistan. Thus for India, China became a major external threat to Indian security particularly in view of its quickly developed close ties Pakistan.¹⁰⁴

Moreover, after independence while India sought to solve its minority problems by establishing a secular state, Pakistan decided to be an Islamic republic. The reports of maltreatment of minority problems by establishing a secular state, Pakistan decided to be an Islamic republic. The reports of maltreatment of minorities in either side started causing serious strains on bilateral relations of India and Pakistan.

The problem of division of assets of India between Pakistan and India too kept Indo-Pak relations tense and strained during the initial years of their relations.

The division of Punjab into West Punjab into West Punjab, which came to be a part of Pakistan and East Punjab which remained with India brought with it the problem of distribution of canal waters. This problem arose out of the unnatural partition Punjab.

In 1966, both countries signed the Tashkent Declaration and agreed to settle all their issues and problems through bilateral negotiations. But this agreement too failed to secure good neighbourly relations between them. It also kept the Kashmir issue unresolved. Towards the ending years of the seventh decade India and Pakistan once again came to develop highly tense and strained relations due to the emergence of Bangladesh crisis. In December, 1971, there broke out the third war between them. But this time India achieved a decisive victory of Pakistan now Bangladesh. India was in a position to capture some vitally important and strategic areas of Pakistan and a large number of Pakistan POW. However, for securing normalization in Indo-Pak relations India decided to hold the Simla Summit with Pakistan and to sign the Simla Agreement of 1972. This Agreement constituted a bold bilateral attempt to normalize Indo-Pak relations.

In the Simla Conference of 1972, Prime Minister Bhutto did raise the Kashmir question but purely at the superficial level. The Simla Agreement included a sub-clause of clause IX and it said, "In Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the cease-fire of December 17, 1971, shall be respected by both

sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter in unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from threat or the use of force in violation of this line."¹⁰⁵

Pakistan in fact made use of the SAARC forum to launch an anti-India media campaign during the Dhaka Summit, rousing the Kashmir issue, defending Pakistani nuclear programme and depicting India as a "hegemonist" which was taking a "negative" attitude on SAARC proposals. Given the background of the regional summit and the explicit prohibition of reference to bilateral and continuous issues, such a media blitz through distribution of biased literature was hardly in tune with the so-called SAARC spirit which was said to have pervaded Dhaka during the meeting.

Another instance of the reality's manifestation was the occasion when the SAARC countries were to cancel the special stamp, brought out by them to mark the summer. The Pakistani stamp showed the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir as a separate territory; and Maldives stamp showed Sikkim as a separate entity. India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi told the Conference Chairman, President Ershad that he could not share the same platform where such objectionable stamps were to be released. The proposed ceremony was then given up reportedly on the technical objection that such cancellation of stamps could be undertaken only on the territories of the respective countries. While an explanation was forthcoming from Maldives to the effect that its stamp was based on a map of a UN agency, no such explanation came forth from Pakistan. In the process, Pakistan effectively brought in a bilateral contentions issue into the summit through the backdoor. President Zia in his inaugural speech while calling for agreement at the regional level for confidence-building, called for steps to banish nuclear weapons. This again was an issue on which India and Pakistan had divergent views, and in keeping with the SAARC spirit, should not have been raised.¹⁰⁶

The second summit level meeting was held in India at Bangalore in 1986. The seven countries were represented by their heads of the governments but Pakistan was represented by Prime Minister Junejo, as General Zia had reserved himself for nonaligned meet. Junejo brought in the question of reported arms build

up on Indo-Pakistan border, and sought to drag SAARC into a purely bilateral problem. Thus, the realities of the ground situation despite emphasis on the ideals of regional cooperation did hamper the growth of the SAARC spirit.

India as Chairman remained somewhat subdued but adhered to the principles of the SAARC and avoided bilateral irritants to get mixed up with its ideals, even when Pakistan and Sri Lanka made a coordinated attempt to deflect SAARC from its Chartered course. They wanted a discussion on bilateral issues with a clear intention to embarrass India on her air dropping of relief in Jaffna. Pakistan's role in this context particularly was one of a disrupter or in any case it was an attempt on its part to establish itself as a friend of Sri Lanka Vis-à-vis India and a covert expression of her objection to emerge as a regional power in South Asia. Pakistan's hidden ambition to forge behind its repeated efforts to raise bilateral problems at the SAARC forum, despite being fully aware that such an exercise went against both the letter and the spirit of the SAARC.

This Indian policy towards neighbours was its a standing policy in respect of all neighbours, even Pakistan although the latter never credited India with good intentions. Once, early in 1981, Indira Gandhi told some visiting Pakistani Journalists : Nothing is more important to us than good relations with our neighbours and especially, with Pakistan."¹⁰⁸ On a visit to Islamabad, P.V.Narasimha Rao remarked : "India's commitment to friendship with Pakistan incorporates its support for Pakistani well-being and growth I take this opportunity to state unequivocally that we are committed to respect Pakistanis national unity, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereign equality."¹⁰⁸ Unfortunately, such Indian statements on Pakistani soil and elsewhere meant little to the Pakistani Psyche.

Indeed, while relations with Pakistan occupied an important segment of India's policy, Pakistani approach has almost wholly been obsessed with India. India was merely concerned with peaceful coexistence with Pakistan; the latter seemed to be concerned wholly with one upmanship with the former : while India managed to play a modest role in global affairs with a peep-hole to India. This Pakistani dichotomy had little to do with the comparative sizes of the two countries; it had more to do with Pakistani ceteris paribus myopia. In the process, both their larger status

of the region hurt not only their respective national interests but also a greater global role both are singly or together capable of playing.

Given the long history of acrimonious relations, the deep-rooted mutual distrust, and the fact that some of their bilateral disputes are still unresolved, it is unrealistic to expect a speedy normalization of their bilateral relation, particularly now that the Kashmir issue has erupted again. Normalisation is going to be a slow process with periodic interruptions and reversals. However, the policy of India and Pakistan to continue to talk on the contentious issues at the bilateral and multilateral/regional (SAARC) levels is a positive development. This makes one cautiously optimistic that the efforts of the two countries to keep their problems within manageable limits and defuse periodic tension will over time, contribute to establishing an environment of cordinality and trust in South Asia.¹⁰⁹

Other Country's Bilateral Relations

India has always been a dominant factor in South Asian Politics. Regardless of the historical period, the geopolitical environment or the socio-economic conditions, the country always occupied the central stage in the area.

This central position became particularly important with the advent of British colonialism, and with the consequent unification of the subcontinent. A power centre finally emerged to gain control of the Indian Ocean, the whole of the subcontinental land mass and the countries surrounding it.

Ruled by London, the viceregal centre of power established in Delhi, had the authority to decide the broad policy framework for not only India but also for the peripheral areas surrounding the country, including the northern states of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet, the eastern state of Myanmar, the nearby islands of Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and the north western state of Afghanistan. All these countries were either British colonies or under British colonies or under British domination.

The whole area had, thus, become a vast British empire or a sphere of influence with the decision making centre located at Delhi.

This disintegration of the viceregal centre of power after World War II, and the final establishment of seven sovereign states in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives) did not diminishes the importance of India. First of all, new and independent India dominates the whole area geographically. She is the only country that is either contiguous to or has a large coastal line with, all the other six states, while none of them have any common borders with each other. Her geographical centrality is accentuated all the more by the important fact that there is no other country, equally big in size and sufficiently close by, to counter the predominant Indian position. There is, of course, China to be reckoned with which had, with the occupation of Tibet in 1950, reached the borders of the Asian subcontinent, but her accessibility to the area is hardly comparable with that of India, given the difficulties of the northern terrain. Admittedly, China showed remarkable capacity in overcoming this handicap during the Sino-Indian War of 1962 when the Chinese troops crossed the Indian border, but this can hardly be collated with the centuries of massive and uninterrupted movement of people, armies and goods across the plains of the subcontinent. Geographically, it is hardly conceivable that any nation beyond the frontiers of the subcontinent can equal the advantages that India possesses. 'Geography', as K.M. Pannikar has put it, constitutes the permanent basis of every nation's history' including of course, that of India whose internal policies and external relations' are governed largely by its unattainable geographical conditions and their relations in space to other countries'.

The leverage, at least theoretically the India has over the other countries of the region is, therefore, exceptionally powerful. Land locked countries like Nepal and Bhutan, for example, can hardly survive economically without India's cooperation. Most of what they produce is marketed in India, and most of what they consume comes from India, not to speak of the fact that nothing can ingress to or egress from there to other countries without India's approval. Bangladesh is heavily dependent for water on India's Gangetic plain, and Pakistan's main source of water supply for the agriculturally rich Punjab emanates from rivers that originate in or pass through

India. Though the insecular character of the two island states (Sri Lanka and the Maldives) makes them less vulnerable to Indian pressures their proximity to the vast Indian coast line and the strong ethnic Indian presence in the two areas, nonetheless, makes them heavily dependent on India.

The second factor is the sheer size of the country. India is a relative giant. Her size, population, GDP, natural resources, military clout, and so on, are far larger than that of the six countries of the region combined. For example, she accounts for 72% of the total land in the area and 77% of the population of South Asia. 85% of the total land under cultivation is in India. 90% of the coal and petroleum and almost 100% of the iron ore, bauxite, manganese and uranium resources are found in India.

The regional ramifications of giantism are far-reaching. The leverage that India has over her neighbour is considerable. In fact, this is more significant in international relations than in the domestic sector. On the positive side, this makes it possible for her to protect neighbouring countries against external threats, to assist them economically, and to permit them to benefit from the educational, medical and even employment facilities that exist in India. In fact some do. On the negative side, Indian 'giantism' has engendered considerable fear and mistrust among the neighbouring countries, which is inherent in the asymmetrical situation, and can probably only be eliminated if the Indian compound state is dissolved into a dozen 'Thailands' (Lewis, 1991 : 389).

The third characteristic feature is the subcontinent's geographical unity and religio-cultural-ethnic diversity. Its unity stems from the fact that the subcontinent is 'indistinctly a geographical unit' which is 'marked out by nature as a region by itself'¹¹⁰ and which has features that clearly separate it 'as a whole from the surrounding regions.'¹¹¹ 'It is no exaggeration', confirmed Sri Richard Strachey, 'to say that it is possible to go from the Bay of Bengal up the Ganges through the Punjab and down the Indus again to the sea, over a distance of 2000 miles and more, without finding a pebble, however, small.'¹¹²

If this geographical unity accentuates the importance of India in South Asia politics, so does the religio-cultural-ethnic diversity. For India houses all the ethnic

groups, all the different cultural expressions, and all the religious orientations that the six South Asian nation represent.

It is, indeed, the geographical unity and the intermingling of peoples, cultures and religions that imparts a unique quality to inter-state relations in South Asia in which for better or for worse, India undoubtedly is the fulcrum.

The fourth feature is the stability of the Indian political system and the contrasting instability that afflicts the other states of the area. Practically all the states have had their coup d'etats, their civil wars, their ethnic discontent and their authoritarian governments. It is, indeed, hardly possible for India to design the broad framework of her foreign policy without taking this dimension into account; for nothing is worse for the future of a nation than the continuous existence of endemic instability in the areas surrounding the country. In fact, signs of some spill over of this state of affairs is already becoming visible. Though all the difficulties that India is faced with internally cannot be attributed solely to the instability of her immediate environment (some of them are also due to internal issues), it can hardly be denied that the destabilization of Assam is partially due to the influx of refugees into the area from Bangladesh, that the growing difficulties in Tamil Nadu are connected with the ethnic turmoil in Sri Lanka, that the Punjab and Kashmir imbroglios are linked to neighbouring Pakistan, and that the instability of the whole of the north-eastern tribal belt has some connection with the continuously unstable situation that has afflicted Myanmar since independence.

This growing regional interdependence has certainly contributed to the activation of India's policy towards the region, particularly after 1971 when, in the aftermath of the events in Bangladesh, India had become more confident of her power and had acquired greater capacity in managing critical situations in South Asia.

The fifth feature that has also contributed to the manifestation of the new Indian determination to play a more conspicuous role in the area is the core value system to which she adheres. India is a political and secular democracy, and has been so since her independence in 1947 with the exception of a brief period when Indira Gandhi had clamped down an Emergency rule on the country. This has

become very much a part of India's core values, on which there is a wide consensus among the Indian population and among all the mainstream political parties.

However, in contrast to the general acceptance of these core values, the other States of South Asia have been hovering between some form of authoritarianism and some form of indigenously contrived democracy thus generating considerable political uncertainty in the region as a whole. If an unstable South Asian strategic environment is bad for India, a system uncertainly surrounding the country is an equal threat, to which India has to respond by designing a pattern of diplomacy that would closely monitor the overall situation prevailing in the area.

India's policy towards neighbours was to deal with all matters on a bilateral basis. Again, this was a general policy equally applicable towards the neighbours. India felt that all matters with neighbours should be settled bilaterally on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, i.e. without needlessly complicating them by internationalising in multilateral forum, or inviting third party intervention. But this was not reciprocated by Pakistan and sometimes by other neighbours too. Bangladesh actually took (1979) to the UN General Assembly the problem of distribution of the waters of the Ganges in order to bring international pressure on India to solve the dispute in its favour. There have been occasional hints or threats in Nepal and Sri Lanka too to internationalize the problems they had with India. While they did not actually do so, they have not hesitated to air in international for their grievances or atleast their viewpoint, obviously to embarrass, if not pressurize, India. This is an aspect of India's bilateral relations with neighbours, which India could do nothing about, except to plead persuasively that bilateral solutions are more effective and enduring, even if usually a little dilatory; and that internationalization of essentially bilateral matters would not only be conducive to enduring friendly relations between neighbours but also, sometimes unnecessarily complicating the issues and delaying a lasting solution.

The most controversial case of neighbours ignoring these Indian pleas is, of course, Pakistan which has made a habit of referring persistently to the Kashmir question in every international forum. This Pakistani tactics has not only not promoted the Pakistani cause on this or other issues of Indo-Pakistani relations, it

has proved counter – productive in the sense that the solution of the dispute has been greatly delayed. The rest of the world is perfectly aware that the Pakistan posture is not only not in a accord with the terms of the Shimla Accord, but is in violation of it. This Pakistani practice has also inhibited normalization of friendly relations between the two countries, despite regular Indian appeals and efforts to promote confidence building measures and trust between the two neighbours.

Indeed, Pakistan has sometimes even tried to fish in the troubled waters between India and other neighbours, because of Pakistan's previousness with India. Also, by exploiting small neighbours grievances against India, it tried to gong them up against India. A typical example of this was when Pakistan joined Sri Lanka in Blaming India for scutting the SAARC Summit in Colombo in 1991.

Needless to say that until recently, Pakistan never hesitated to involve the interference in sub-continental affairs of extra regional powers for its own self-serving reasons, e.g., China and the United States in the context of the crisis in East Pakistan in 1971-72. If these powers did not show more than symbolic interest in response to Pakistan's plea, it is largely because of India's stern opposition to such extra-regional intervention.

It is perhaps because of this Pakistani tendency of using every international forum available to it for propoganda against India over the Kashmir question, that India was less than enthusiastic initially in agreeing to Pakistani's request for re-entering the Commonwealth of Nations, from whose membership it withdrew in a herff in 1972. Despite the fact that bilateral matters are expressly excluded from discussion in the Commonwealth forum Pakistan had in the Commonwealth forum Pakistan had in the past, raised the question although indirectly and slyly, intermittently over the years. Only when Pakistan came to moving towards a democratic government under Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 1988, India agreed to relent in its hesitation to agree to its readmission.

In recent years, in respect of resolution of disputes with neighbours, it is not only India that insists in bilateral discussions and settlement, but practically the whole of the rest of the world (including all the five permanent members of the UN Security Council) that have been recommending it, especially in regard to Pakistan's

appeals for third-party intervention for the resolution of the Kashmir question. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the world community is pretty tired with Pakistani appeals on this matter.

Beside, these are some bilateral relations between the small neighbouring countries also.¹¹³

For instance, there is no tradition of direct relations between Bhutan and Bangladesh. Whatever relations there were between them in the pre-British period were due mainly to the political position of Bhutan and the Mughals in relation to the principalities of Koch, Khasi, Jaintia and Cooch Behar. There are also indications that there was trade between Bhutan and Bengal in the past.

King Jigme Dorji Wang Chuk took keen interest in the liberation of Bangladesh. Bhutan was the second country, after India, to recognize Bangladesh and establish diplomatic relations with it on 7 December 1971. The President of Bangladesh visited Bhutan on the occasion of the coronation of King Jigme Singye Wangchuk. King Jigme Singye paid a state visit to Bangladesh on 28-30 December. Bhutan and Bangladesh signed a treaty of trade and transit in Dhaka in September 1980. Friendly relations subsist between Bhutan and Bangladesh.¹¹⁴

Relations between Bhutan and Nepal are historical. The Bhutanese look upon Nepal as a sacred country. Nepal of the Bagmati valley, where the kagyupa Sect of Buddhism had its strongholds, was one of the first countries to recognize the spiritual and temporal authority of Shabdrung lama nagawang nangyal over Bhutan. Bhutan stationed a monk representative in Nepal for the first time in the second part of the seventeenth century. In the 1770s Bhutan and Nepal developed an understanding to resist the British advance towards the Himalaya border countries. However, despite this, amity between them, Bhutan remained neutral in the Nepalese – Tibetan conflict of 1788-89 and the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16. The special connection between Bhutan and Nepal ended after the Nepalese-Tibetan War of 1855-56. Bhutan then refused to help Nepal against Tibet, the source of its religion and culture. The Bhutanese attached great importance to their sense of cultural affinity with Tibet, the source of its religion and culture. The Bhutanese attached

great importance to their sense of cultural affinity with Tibet. Nepal reciprocated by not helping Bhutan against the British during the Anglo-Bhutanese War of 1864-65.

There have been no direct relations between Bhutan and Nepal since the Anglo-Bhutanese treaty of 8 January 1910, which made Bhutan's external relations a direct concern of the British government of India. The Indo-Bhutanese treaty of 8 August 1949 also allowed no scope for diplomatic relations between Bhutan and Nepal.

When Nepal emerged as a democratic region in the 1950s certain Nepalese politicians evinced keen interest in Bhutan. In December 1964 a number of Bhutanese attempted a coup d'état and, upon their failure to pull it off, escaped to Nepal, Nepal readily gave them asylum. It did so perhaps to annoy India. For Indo-Nepalese relations then were not too happy. The Nepalese action hurt Bhutanese susceptibilities. Most of the Bhutanese fugitives returned to Bhutan after King Jigme Dorji granted them amnesty, but the bitterness remained. Now Bhutan and Nepal have established non-resident ambassador-level diplomatic relations, the ambassadors of Bhutan and Nepal in New Delhi being concurrently accredited to Kathmandu and Thimphu.

Besides religious and historical relations, Bhutan and Nepal also had social relations between them. It may be noted that Dasho Jigme Namgyal (1825-82), an ancestor of the present reigning dynasty of Bhutan, the House of Wang Chhuk once had plans to arrange his daughter's marriage in Nepal.¹¹⁵

Bangladesh and Nepal had identical interests in involving outside intervention against India. Bangladesh after 1976, demanded the inclusion of Nepal in the deliberations of the Joint River Commission which has established under the India-Bangladesh Treaty of 1972. Nepal on the other hand, was out to involve China in the development of water resources of this region, which China was reluctant to commit to itself to such an issue before going into the details of it, India dismissed the logic of the participation of China as it was not a South Asian country.¹¹⁶

A cooperative relationship has grown between Sri Lanka and Pakistan in the last three years. President Zia-ul-Haq has visited Sri Lanka and President Jayewardene has returned the visit. Each was received by the other with the

cordiality and warmth generally reserved for every special friends. The Sri Lankan prime Minister, Mr. Rana Singha Premadasa, has just paid a very special visit to Pakistan receiving the warmest possible welcome in the Principal cities. The friendship that binds Sri Lanka and Pakistan has a clear and sharp anti-India edge.

Some Pakistanis see the friendship of Sri Lanka as a partial compensation for the loss of the eastern wing of the country which is now the people's Republic of Bangladesh wrote the Nation of Lahore, in an editorial on March 29 appraising the significance of Premadasa's visit "Pakistan-Sri Lanka political equitation is a post 1971 phenomenon and its consolidation has stabilized the region to some extent. After the assertion of its great power role India has tensed to put its neighbours on guard Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have all experiences this pressure and have sought to counter it through political means SAARC, which created a forum of equal partners, is also directed against the Indian strategy to deal with its neighbours severally from a position of advantage.¹¹⁷

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