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# **INTRODUCTION TO SOUTH ASIA**

**B.P.S.E.- 144**

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*By: Ratika Verma*



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# QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

## INTRODUCTION TO SOUTH ASIA

B.P.S.E.-144

Time: 3 Hours ]

[ Maximum Marks : 100

**Note :** This question paper has **two** sections. Answer any **five** questions, selecting at least **two** questions from each section.

### SECTION-I

**Q. 1. Explain the South Asian politics in cold war era.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 2, 'South Asia During the Cold War Years' and Page No. 4, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 2. Explain the presence of great powers in shaping the foreign policy of South Asian countries.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 38, Q. No. 3, Q. No. 4 and Q. No. 5.

**Q. 3. Discuss the 2nd phase of Taliban Rule in Afghanistan and its impact on South Asia.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-6, Page No. 52, 'Afghanistan'.

**Q. 4. Write short notes on the following:**

(a) Great Game

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-6, Page No. 55, Q. No. 1.

(b) Social Media in South Asia

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 36, Q. No. 5.

### SECTION-II

**Q. 5. Explain the role of America during the cold war in South Asia.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 4, Q. No. 3 and Page No. 9, 'The Philippines and Vietnam'.

**Q. 6. What are the main ecological crises in South Asia? What could be done to minimize the damage?**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-9, Page No. 79, 'Introduction', Page No. 80, 'Changing Trends of Development and Their Impact on Environment in South Asia' and 'Population Explosion' and 'Development in South Asia' and Page No. 81, 'Regional Forums for Ecological Issues in South Asia'.

**Q. 7. What is Tracts II Diplomacy in the context of South Asia?**

**Ans.** The decline of the state and the expansion of the global civil society since the end of the Cold War have also led to proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are fast emerging as important non-state actors in a globalized world.

Engaged in wide variety of humanitarian, medical, educational, and other relief and development activities, NGOs also play important roles in managing and resolving different global conflicts, including the deadly ones. Three broad categories of NGOs can be identified that have been making significant contributions to the preventions of deadly conflicts. These are: human rights and other advocacy groups; humanitarian and development organizations; and small but growing number of Track II groups that help open the way for more formal internal or international peace process.

The bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India are imperative having a strong historic basis. Based on mutual benefit and mutual respect, both countries are making every effort towards moving forward. The geographical proximity, cultural affinity and shared history of both the countries, remain as strong base for streamlining the relationship. It all began in December 1971, when India became the first country to recognize Bangladesh as a separate and independent state and established diplomatic relations immediately after its independence.

It has been 48 years of bilateral relations and firm pledge from both sides particularly Modi and Hasina Government that have conceded the further momentum towards a close and friendly relationship shared between India and Bangladesh. Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's invitation to the SAARC leaders at his swearing ceremony in 2014 was an unprecedented move that reflected his vision of South Asia. He is aware of the fact that if India is to build up as a regional power, a friendly neighborhood shall definitely play a crucial role in it. His reaching out to the neighbors before engaging with great powers such as the US, Russia, China and the EU, is a clear indication of priority that Modi attaches to the region. Over the last five years, the two countries signed a number of treaties that encouraged trade and economic cooperation, provided easier connectivity resulting in more people-to-people

contact, and most importantly, addressed a number of security issues that had strained their relationship in the past.

In addition to it, Bangladesh-India relations have been blessed with the informal nature of diplomacy, known as Track II diplomacy. Thus, the momentum of greater regional integration was re-energized in recent years but, meeting all the challenges require more than business as usual. With the application of Track II diplomacy across level, greater cooperation and regional economic integration can bring about gains in these areas and help tap into the proximity and demographic dividend, South Asian countries enjoy.

According to the High Commission of India in Bangladesh, every year Indian government offers 200 scholarships for Bangladeshi students under ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) Scholarship Scheme. Over 3,000 ICCR scholarships have been granted to Bangladeshi nationals by the government of India till 2018. Besides, these two countries agreed to establish High Level India- Bangladesh Education Dialogue, strengthen collaboration on technical and vocational education and provide mutual support in scientific issues and in the areas of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Similarly, both the countries have deeper 'Economic Diplomacy'. Trade statistics between India and Bangladesh published by High Commission of India in Bangladesh shows that Bangladesh has emerged as major trading partner of India with bilateral trade exceeding USD 10 billion annually. Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and India was USD 9.5 billion in FY2017-18 with exports to India pegged at USD 0.87 billion and imports, at USD 8.6 billion. Bangladesh's exports to India crossed USD 1.0 billion mark in 2019.

The proposed Kartarpur Peace Corridor between India and Pakistan, a product of Track Two Diplomacy between the two South Asian neighbours, is a welcome step to increase people to people contact and thereby ease tensions between the two neighbours.

The Kartarpur Peace Corridor will allow Sikhs visa-free access from India to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan. This Sikh shrine which holds the ashes of Saint Guru Nanak, (1469-1539), the founder of the Sikh religion is located in Pakistan, but viewable from India and separated after demarcation of the India-Pakistan border in 1947.

Track Two Diplomacy is non-governmental, informal and unofficial contacts or activities between private citizens or groups of individuals, who are also called non-state actors. It is distinct from Track One Diplomacy, which is official, conducted between government channels. Track Two cannot substitute Track One diplomacy but only supplement state actors

to manage and resolve conflicts through exploration of possible solutions.

**Q. 8. Write short notes on the following:**

**(a) Mass Media**

**Ans.** Mass media is a term denoting that section of the media specifically designed to reach a very large audience (typically at least as large as the whole population of a nation-state), today including not only radio and television, which tend to be limited to the local or national level, but also the Internet, which is global. It was coined in the 1920s, with the advent of nationwide radio networks, mass-circulation newspapers, and magazines, especially in the United States, although mass media was present centuries before the term became common.

The mass media audience has been viewed by some as forming a "mass society" with special characteristics, notably atomization or lack of social connections, which render it especially susceptible to the influence of modern mass media techniques of persuasion such as advertising and propaganda. Mass media can be one of the hardest forms of media within which to decipher what is true and what is not. Given that mass media penetrates the whole of society, its reach and influence is immense. Therefore, the responsibility of those participating in this type of communication is also great, as the future direction of human society could well be guided by the mass media.

**(b) Multiculturalism**

**Ans.** The term multiculturalism has a range of meanings within the contexts of sociology, political philosophy, and colloquial use. In sociology and in everyday usage, it is a synonym for "ethnic pluralism", with the two terms often used interchangeably, and for cultural pluralism in which various ethnic groups collaborate and enter into a dialogue with one another without having to sacrifice their particular identities. It can describe a mixed ethnic community area where multiple cultural traditions exist (such as New York City or London) or a single country within which they do (such as Switzerland, Belgium or Russia). Groups associated with an indigenous, aboriginal or autochthonous ethnic group and settler-descended ethnic groups are often the focus.

In reference to sociology, multiculturalism is the end-state of either a natural or artificial process (for example: legally-controlled immigration) and occurs on either a large national scale or on a smaller scale within a nation's communities. On a smaller scale this can occur artificially when a jurisdiction is established or expanded by amalgamating areas with two or more different cultures (e.g. French Canada and English Canada). On a large scale, it can occur as a result of either legal or illegal migration to and from different jurisdictions around the world.



# Sample Preview of The Chapter

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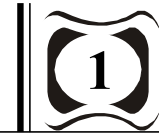
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# INTRODUCTION TO SOUTH ASIA

## BLOCK-1 : SOUTH ASIA : AN INTRODUCTION



## South Asia as a Region

### INTRODUCTION

The South Asia region made by forming several nation-states that are bound together by a common geography, or, are linked with historical events and civilisations having multi-lingual and cultural identity and institutionalised form of a regional cooperation mechanism. The countries or nation-states that constitute 'South Asia Region' are: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan.

Earlier, the region of South Asia was famous by the name of 'Indian Subcontinent' or 'Southern Asia' which simply signifies that region is located to the south of Asia.

Hence, today, the term region of South Asia is used as a sub-regional entity by many multilateral institutions like – United Nations, WTO, IMF, World Bank, etc., and got its sanction by creating SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation).

### CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

#### GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTH ASIA

The Himalayan belt in the northern hemisphere of the South Asia separates it from East Asia, while the southern peninsular plateau characterised by the Deccan Plateau and the Indo-Gangetic plain and desert were intermingled in between them. Therefore, the island states, Sri Lanka and Maldives, and landlocked state, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan have their own exceptional features in geographical aspects. Despite having unique characteristics, countries, time and again, facing disagreements, conflicts with regard to river water sharing and common open borders that may take illegal course of action. India is the largest country among the South Asian countries that occupies nearly three-fourth of the landmass.

#### HISTORY OF SOUTH ASIA

There were vivid range of series occurred in different periods starting from Indus valley civilisation which considered as one of the oldest civilisations, to the Vedic period which later known as Bronze Age, which led to emergence of Buddhism and Jainism (the non-Vedic movements), which further lead to arrivals of Islam in the sub-continent which means invading of Arabs, Turks and mongols, and then lastly, welcoming the colonial British rule that lasted for two hundred years. They all jointly or severally aid the South Asian countries to form their present-day political and administrative structure. These ancient and medieval influencers have left their footprints on the South Asian region and hence helped the countries to shape their political scenario.

Addition to these, the post-colonial period has their role to play in shaping the nations in South Asia. India-Pakistan conflicts, Bangladesh independence, Sinhala-Tamil wars in Sri Lanka, insurgencies in North-east, have some how lead to formation of present-day scenario of South Asian countries. These multitudes of events that occurred in history has given a stringent example to the outer world about the workings and dealings of South Asian nations. These events, time and again, pull down the growth of these nations, hence in absence of these hurdles, South Asia would have been a developed region till date, but it is currently considered as a developing one in its wisest form.

#### POLITICS OF SOUTH ASIA

The South Asian countries, during the post-colonial period, has articulated their freedom by determining to select for any form of government that suits best to their then current situation as there is diversity in religion, caste, creed, language, occupation cultures, etc., all over the South Asia. This vividness led the

countries to decide different types of forms of government that they believe can maintain proper law and order in the country.

#### **Form of Government**

After the end of colonial rule or end of any colonised period in South Asian region, the countries started structuring their government based on their socio-political scenario. There are many different forms of government present in South Asian region, such as parliamentary form, presidential form, semi-presidential form and monarchy form of government:

- The countries that following parliamentary form of government are – India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Among them, three countries have federal republics, they are – India, Pakistan and Nepal.
- Bangladesh has unitary republic and Bhutan is having a constitutional monarchy.
- Sri Lanka has semi-executive presidency.
- Maldives has presidential form of government.

#### **Political Parties**

The political parties such as Indian national congress in India, Awami League in Bangladesh, United National Party in Sri Lanka, Pakistan's People Party, Nepali Congress, etc., had played an active role in decolonising the south Asian countries in their freedom struggles and bringing the social change while hugging the democracy with new developments and social justice in the parts of South Asia. This pushes the nation on the progressive road. Addition to this there are several political parties having ideologies based on regional or sub-regional aspirations across the nation making it a multi-party system.

#### **Political Processes**

The political process in the South Asian countries has been a difficult task to work upon as the countries post-colonial period have develop some strange issues like religious minorities, communal riots, politics of regionalism, area/boundary issues have always been evident. These issues make the process even stiffer. Also, the political parties had the dynastic consideration of which some examples are – Nehru-Gandhi family in India, Bhutto-Sharif family in Pakistan, Koirala family in Nepal, etc.

#### **Intra-regional Politics**

During the colonisation, the seed of differentiation has been bowed on the ground of language, economic status, religion, ethnicity, due to which if a country had

an identity conflict within, it has potential to roll over to the neighbouring countries. It is evident that, India is always a denominator in such conflicts due to acquiring of its most area and resources. For e.g., India's role in Bangladesh liberation, India's unsuccessful mediation role in Sinhalese-Tamil role in Sri Lanka. The regional ramification of domestic politics is seen when Nepali's political turmoil during struggle against monarchy and questioning of Indian origin *Madeshis*.

#### **SOUTH ASIA IN GLOBAL GEO-POLITICS**

South Asia has always been at beneficial position due to its geographical features. Also, due to geo-political landscape, they retain the advantage to achieve its unique position at global geo-politics.

#### **South Asia During the Cold War Years**

During the cold war period, South Asian countries themselves faced grudges against each other while supporting their super powers i.e., US and Soviet Union at the international level. India adopted the policy of Non-Alignment showed its ideology of Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Security, while Pakistan signed south East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) making its intentions crystal, and later become a proxy for US to support Afghan Mujahidin against USSR. Later, both India and Pakistan become the member of Non-Alignment Movement (NAM).

#### **South Asia and the Global War on Terror**

The conflicts between India and Pakistan have become a global flashpoint after the two nations conducted nuclear tests at Pokhran and Chagai respectively. Pakistan is considered as a key ally of United States when 9/11 attacks held in 2001 in US, that makes Pakistan a frontline state in picture of terror on global war. One of the major issues that India and Pakistan cannot come on same footings on the issues of Kashmir that is the main bone of contention (up till 2019).

#### **South Asia and China**

China has great influence on conflict dynamics among or with the South Asian countries. China's geographical presence on the global front cannot be ignored and has strategic vision to global connectivity of roads that lead to Beijing through Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI). China has been a silent global power nation that tremendously working on its trade, infrastructure and networking. While maintaining cordial relations, he is channelising multiple infrastructure projects with neighbouring countries.

SOUTH ASIA AS A REGION / 3

Whereas, India has its limited engagement with China, on the other hand, China has friendly relations with Pakistan.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA**

Post-colonial period, countries took some time to understand their social and economic needs and gradually started working towards it. The foremost challenge was the 'Human Development' that reflects multiple issues such as poverty, health, education, status of females, occupations and the quality-of-life people are living. Human development is a traditional concept which means development and growth of economy which measured on the basis of aggregated income of the society or per capita income.

#### **Human Development in South Asia**

The human development approach gained recognition when United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) presented its first report in 1990. UNDP explained that Human Development Index (HDI) is cumulative measurement of three essentials of human choices require at all level for human development, i.e., longevity, knowledge and decent standard of living. South Asia constitutes nearly one-fourth of the world's population which ultimately makes it challenging to curb the issues of multi-dimensional poverty and require some policy intervention. As per UNDP ranking of 190 countries, South Asian countries comes at lower quarter giving Pakistan – 154 ranks, Nepal – 142, Bangladesh – 133, India – 131 and Bhutan 129, while exempting Sri Lanka at 72.

#### **Economic Growth in South Asia**

The geographical location and size of the population of the countries of South Asia have a direct bearing on their economies. Within South Asia, India is largest in population and in area. A large part of population is living in the rural areas. Since 1990s, South Asian countries have speed up in opening their economic reform initiatives. The growth rate was 5% when they initiated and reached to 7.1% in 2021-22 as projected by World Bank. From 2000 onwards, countries had structural changes and productive or qualitative workforce that create growth opportunities for the people until 2008 when financial crisis strikes. Concepts like privatisation, globalisation and digitalisation have come up that connect countries in more than one way and grow in their respective arenas.

#### **Regional Cooperation**

Regional cooperation plays a crucial role in developing of South Asia as a region especially when

the countries acting as a nuclear power, global terror to the world. SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) was one such positive product of South Asian countries that came into being in 1985. SAARC countries attempted to form cooperation in resolving the issues like – poverty, trade liberalisation, agriculture and textile, etc., while maintaining their own individuality at global scenario. These SAARC countries time and again made some bilateral agreements also among them for any trade and commerce, action and peace, promotional and uplifting in different mode. Clashes of India and Pakistan, breakdown of complete communication had time and again questioned the viability SAARC process.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q. 1. Which are the different forms of government practiced in the South Asian region?**

**Ans.** South Asian region does not have uniform political system to follow. Each country has their own system to abide and able to rule in an appropriate way for their citizens. They all have different history, vivid population with their own ideologies to be followed in their respective countries as per the majority. Therefore, the politics of identity was swapped by politics of ideas. South Asia has experimented with various forms of the government as follows:

- **In Parliamentary form of government**, there is cordial relations between legislature and executive. In this form of government, head of state is different from head of government. This form of government is followed by India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. And out of these, three has federal republic, wherein countries government by elected representatives and elected leader by not king or queen, they are Nepal, India, Pakistan, while Bangladesh has unitary republic where central government is the supreme authority. Lastly, Bhutan has a constitutional monarchy.
- **Presidential form of government** followed by the Maldives. In this, the president enjoys all the real power of the nation. In Maldives, the People' *Majlis* is a unicameral legislative body where *Majlis* can enact, amend laws but not the Constitution of Maldives.
- **Quasi presidential form of government** is followed by Sri Lanka, where people elect the president and he is the head of state, government

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and army battalion, and hence can be removed by votes of parliament members. Semi-presidential form means mix of both the parliamentary and presidential form of government. The constitution can be amended by the two-third majority in parliament.

- **Monarchy, or Constitutional Monarchy** form of government followed by Bhutan. In this, all the political power and authority is in the hands of supreme ruler. The monarch exercises its authority as per the constitution only and not arbitrary manner.

Therefore, each country has been modified to the political circumstances that have existed at that time. For e.g., India has a bicameral parliamentary system based on federal principle and Sri Lanka has presidential system with more unitary features.

**Q. 2. Explain some of the major features of the political parties in South Asia.**

**Ans.** Political parties in South Asia have had some distinguishing features as follows:

- Presence of proto-nationalism, that includes the actions of the administration of colonials. Such as Indian National Congress working for Indian consist of British administrators as well as elite class Indians. Also, some basic features of the constitution were taken from different nations or colonial countries.
- Rely upon importance of sovereign politics, i.e., ruling through hierarchy was present and no professional qualification was required. For examples, Nehru-Gandhi family in India, Bhutto-Sharif family in Pakistan, Koirala family in Nepal, etc.
- There was multi-party system followed which based upon ideological diversity present in South Asian countries. There is no single party that get chance to gain power alone, rather all parties work with one another to form a coalition government.
- Empowering the political mobilisation based on ethnic, religious and cultural differentiation which constantly creates global peace. Some nations have ideologies based on language, religion, culture and they form political party in their country accordingly.

The outcome of these political contestation has been revealed not only within the countries, but at the

global level as well. India has often been a common factor in such inter-state political conflicts, as it is the largest country in South Asia in terms of population, and area and constitute 70% of South Asia.

**Q. 3. Examine how South Asia was impacted during cold war years.**

**Ans.** When the US-USSR cold war rivalry came to an end, it left some imprints on the South Asian countries. America emerged as a super power and its involvement has rapidly increased in south Asia. It had good relations with both India and Pakistan and worked as a moderator in their conflicts.

- India started its peaceful independence movement against the colonial rule.
- Demand of freedom from colonial rule has emerged tremendously.
- Pakistan joined the alliance of US and others on 1954, while in 1955, India encouraged the new nations to avoid taking either side of US and USSR, and follow the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM).
- Cold war heated up with Indo-Pak conflicts over Kashmir in 1965.
- Civil war emergence in 1970 between east and west Pakistan, wherein East Pakistan gains independence and become a state called 'Bangladesh' in 1971.
- The conflict between India and Pakistan was also on strategic issues like take-over of Siachen glacier and acquisition of arms.

Therefore, India and Pakistan twinned replicated the tensions between the Soviet Union and United States, respectively, paving the way for cold war competition. The development of the cold war in Asia converged and combined with anti-colonial struggles and the formation of states and political regimes in the newly independent but still poor countries. In most of these new states, agriculture remained the major economic activity.

Hence, apart from military issues, water sharing and ethnic strife, South Asian region also realised that if the countries could cooperate with each other, they can develop and prosper.

**Q. 4. Explain the present position of South Asia with reference to regional and global geopolitics.**

**Ans.** The scenario of South Asia in the present day is way a more different, developed and had an impressive growth at the global level. Following are the points showing the growth of the countries of South Asia in different sectors: